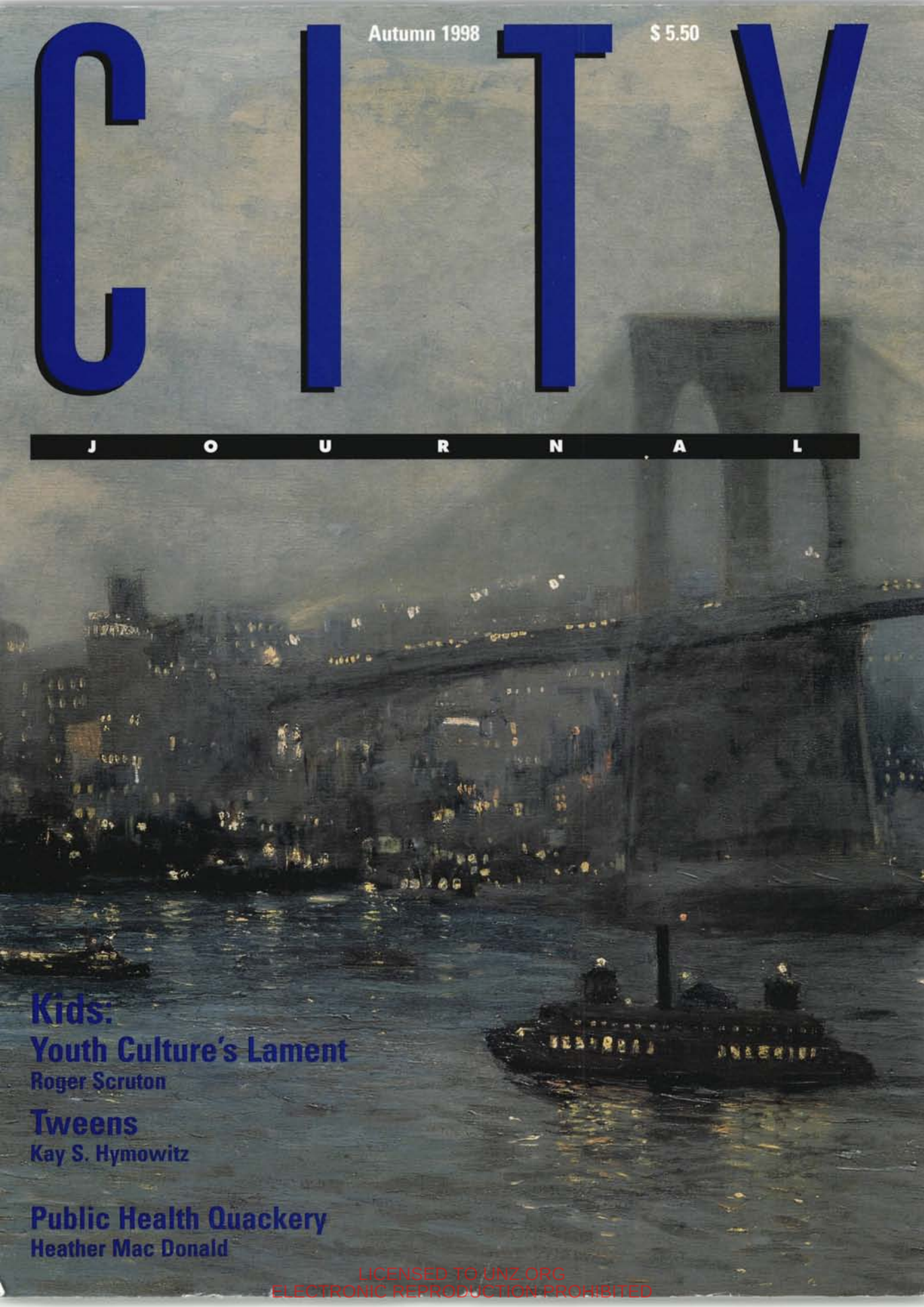
Autumn 1998 $ 5.50

CITY

JOURNAL



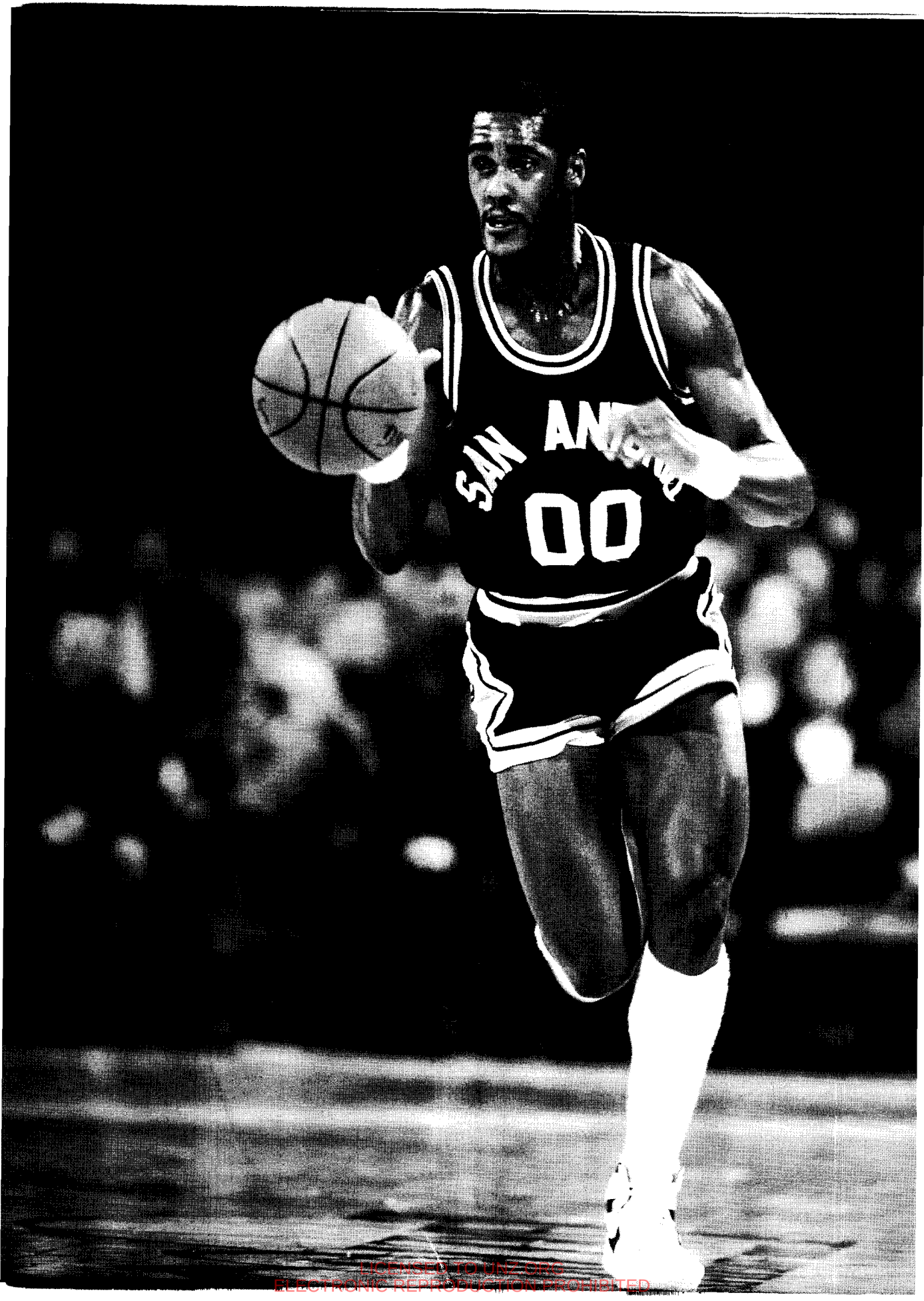
Kids:

Youth Culture's Lament
Roger Scruton

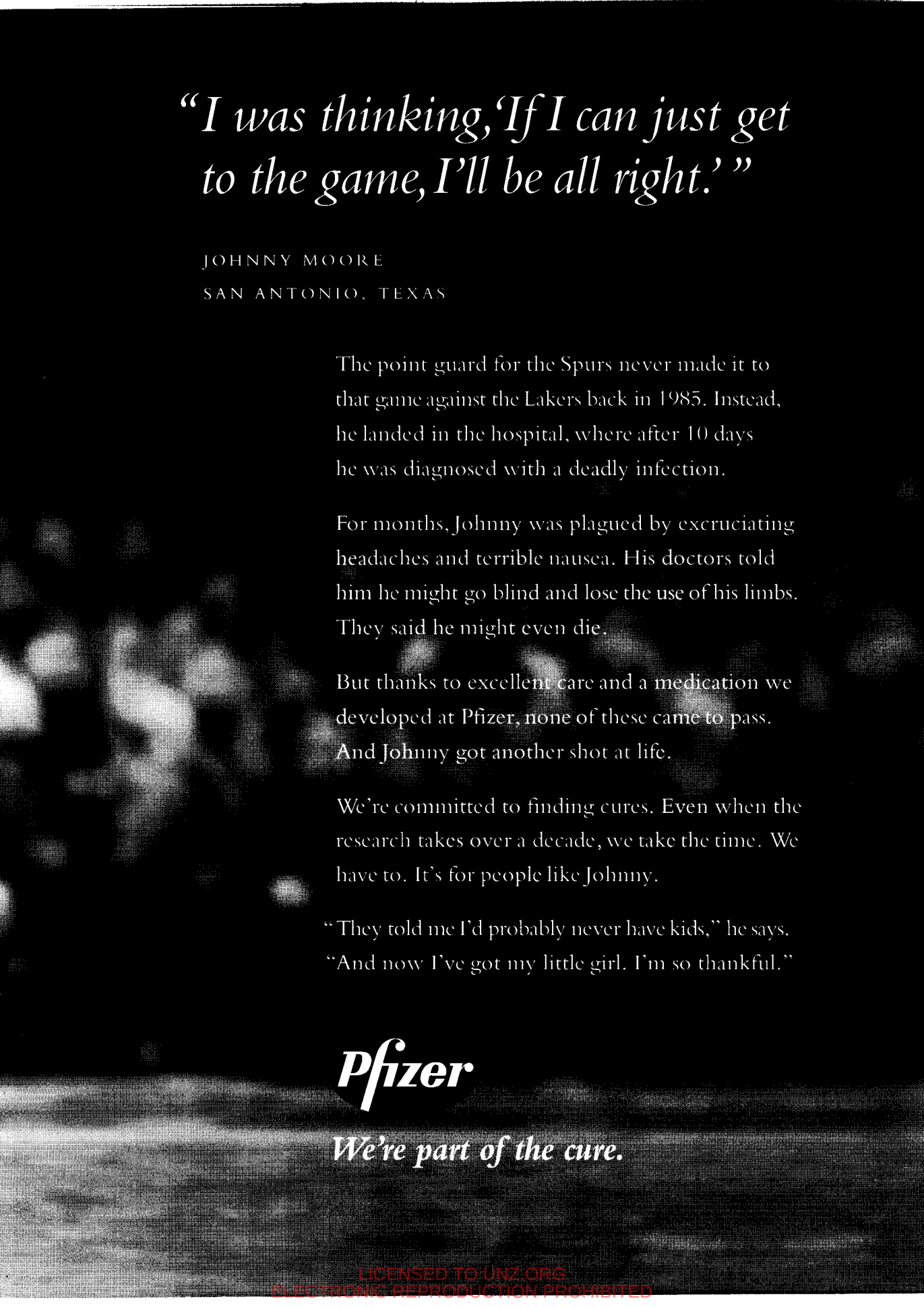
Tweens
Kay S. Hymowitz

Public Health Quackery
Heather Mac Donald

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



"I was thinking, 'If I can just get to the game, I'll be all right.'"

JOHNNY MOORE
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

The point guard for the Spurs never made it to that game against the Lakers back in 1985. Instead, he landed in the hospital, where after 10 days he was diagnosed with a deadly infection.

For months, Johnny was plagued by excruciating headaches and terrible nausea. His doctors told him he might go blind and lose the use of his limbs. They said he might even die.

But thanks to excellent care and a medication we developed at Pfizer, none of these came to pass. And Johnny got another shot at life.

We're committed to finding cures. Even when the research takes over a decade, we take the time. We have to. It's for people like Johnny.

"They told me I'd probably never have kids," he says. "And now I've got my little girl. I'm so thankful."

Pfizer

We're part of the cure.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CITY
JOURNAL
Published by the Manhattan Institute
Autumn 1998 Volume 8, Number 4

Editor
Myron Magnet

Senior Editor
Brian C. Anderson

Contributing Editors
Theodore Dalrymple, David Gelernter,
Kay S. Hymowitz, Stefan Kanfer,
Heather Mac Donald, Richard E. Morgan,
Peter Reinharz, Roger Scruton, Wendy Shalit,
Sol Stern, William J. Stern

Art Director
Sandra Di Pasqua

Picture Editor
Susan Rubin

Editorial Assistant
Edward Craig

Production Manager
Jerome Rufino

Publication Committee
Richard Aspinwall, *Chase Manhattan Bank*
Gary Bogard, *New York, N.Y.*
Eugene D. Brody, *Oppenheimer Capital*
Geoffrey Colvin, *Fortune Magazine*
Edward N. Costikyan, *Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison*
John Craig, *The Commonwealth Fund*
Peter Davidson, *El Diario-La Prensa*
Richard Gilder, *Gilder, Gagnon, Howe & Co.*
Nathan Glazer, *Harvard University*
Edward W. Hayes, *New York, N.Y.*
H. Dale Hemmerdinger, *The Hemmerdinger Corporation*
Edward R. Hintz, *Hintz, Holman & Hecksher Inc.*
Steven Klinsky, *Forstmann, Little & Company*
Marie-Josée Kravis, *Hudson Institute*
Roy Marden, *Philip Morris Companies*
Howard Milstein, *Douglas Elliman-Gibbons & Ives*
Joseph L. Rice III, *Clayton, Dubilier & Rice, Inc.*
Peter D. Salins, *State University of New York*
Joan C. Schwartz, *New York, N.Y.*
Howard Shawn, *New York, N.Y.*
Thomas J. Tisch, *FLF Associates*
Barrie A. Wigmore, *Goldman, Sachs & Company*
Louis Winnick, *Fund for the City of New York*
Kathryn Wylde, *New York City Investment Fund*

2 Cover painting by Edward Redfield (detail)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Contents

Roger Scruton	12	**Youth Culture's Lament** Pop culture's noise and glamour try in vain to fill a gaping void.
Kay S. Hymowitz	26	**Tweens: Ten Going on Sixteen** As the authority of parents wanes, preteens are falling under the sway of peer groups and marketers. The disquieting result: "hip" and "sexy" ten-year-olds.
Heather Mac Donald	40	**Public Health Quackery** Public health professors now teach that social injustice, rather than individual behavior, is the true cause of disease—a sure prescription for a less healthy future.
Brian C. Anderson and Matt Robinson	54	**Willie Brown Shows How Not to Run a City** By jettisoning the new urban wisdom, Mayor Brown is making San Francisco uglier, more dangerous, and financially shaky.
Richard E. Morgan	65	**Yes, Vouchers Are Constitutional** Nothing in the U.S. Constitution or the state constitutions prohibits this highly popular school reform—as the current Supreme Court might soon agree.
Sol Stern	76	**No to Sports Stadium Madness** A tax-funded Yankee Stadium in Manhattan is exactly the wrong idea.
	87	**Portfolio: Grand Again Grand Central**

Urbanities

William J. Stern	94	**Once We Knew How to Rescue Poor Kids**
James Morrison	104	**Who in the World Was Fred F. French?**

Departments

	5	**In Prospect**
	6	**Soundings** BIDding *Adieu*, Nobel Lie, . . . and other matters.
Theodore Dalrymple	110	**Oh, to be in England** Uncouth Chic
	116	**Letters**
	119	**Contributors**
E. V. Kontorovich	120	**Chelsea Diarist** Postmodern Mores

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

We'll let our readers tell you why they never miss an issue.

Mayor Rudolph Giuliani

"*City Journal* has provided a forum for some of our city's—and our nation's—most incisive thinkers, whose writings have enriched our public discourse and helped shape public policy. In the pages of *City Journal*, theorists and practitioners meet, and new approaches to governance emerge. I look forward to many more years of informative, provocative reading."

Tom Wolfe

"*City Journal* is the great Fool Killer in the arena of urban policy. It's more than sharp and penetrating. It's a joy to read."

Mayor Stephen Goldsmith

"*City Journal* is simply an indispensable handbook for anyone interested in urban issues. In Indianapolis City Hall, every issue of *City Journal* gets cut up, copied, passed around, and talked about."

George Will

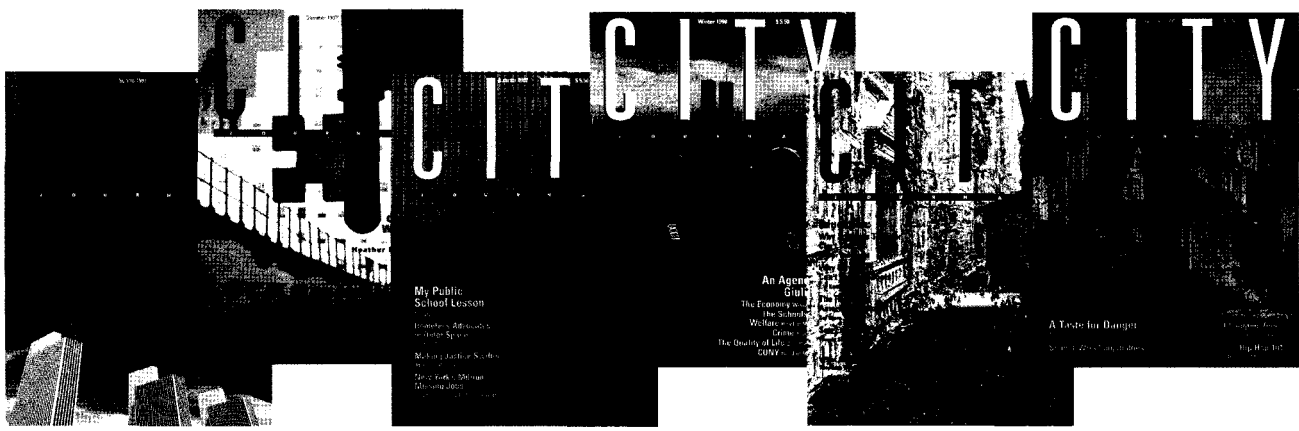
"*City Journal* is consistently the most stimulating source of reporting and analysis concerning the nation's urban problems."

Mayor John Norquist

"*City Journal* is the definitive forum for the best new ideas in urban government. I love *City Journal*, the magazine dedicated to rebuilding urban civilization."

Bill Moyers

"Even when I disagree with *City Journal*, I dare not ignore it."



Order now, at our **subscription price** of $19.95/yr. (four issues)—a 10% **savings** off the newsstand price. **Call (800) 562-1973.**

CITY JOURNAL, SUBSCRIPTION DEPARTMENT, P.O. BOX 3000, DENVILLE, NJ 07834

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

❑ $19.95 for one year (4 quarterly issues) ❑ $34.95 for two years (8 quarterly issues)

❑ Payment enclosed ❑ Please bill me

City Journal. Ideas that work.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In Prospect

CITY JOURNAL has written often in the past about children and young people, and we will be writing about them even more in the future. Not that they are missing from today's political conversation: talk about kids is incessant. But so much of it is sheer humbug, especially the left's claim that much of its program aims at improving the lot of the nation's children. In fact, the welfare ideology at the core of left-wing politics for a generation has profoundly harmed precisely the children whose welfare it claims to advance. It has allowed welfare parents to become exploiters of their own offspring, extracting a living from children whom they can't support and to whom they too often are emotionally and educationally unprepared to give the kind of nurture that produces adults who can succeed. While the it-takes-a-village school of child advocacy hatches a never-ending brood of programs that tinker at the edges of the gargantuan problem it has created, it never comes to grips with the central truth: that encouraging the formation of dysfunctional, single-mother households produces childhood misery on an industrial scale. Raising children takes not a village but a family.

When you move from the political left to the cultural left, the situation isn't much brighter. A generation ago, just when America began overturning and replacing its deepest values and beliefs so completely as to amount to a cultural revolution, critic Leslie Fiedler remarked that young people were growing so different in worldview from their elders as to seem almost a race of "new mutants." He was prescient, especially since at first the new beliefs and values subsisted alongside the old, so that the young people of the 1960s had a double consciousness: they flirted with the new worldview, always with the comforting belief that underneath their experiments with tuning in, turning on, and dropping out was an invincible safety net of the old moral certitudes. The next generation of new mutants had no such double consciousness. A decade or so after Fiedler wrote, many old beliefs had lost their authority and slipped away from the young, along with much of the old knowledge. (One luminous example that stands out from the mid-seventies is a class at an elite liberal arts college, in which not one student could say who Abraham and Isaac were.)

What took the place of the old values? Attitudes like compassion, tolerance, nonjudgmentalism—some of them worthy enough, but as a total morality insipid and unsustaining compared with such old virtues as courage, duty, honor, manliness, sacrifice, and truthfulness. The new ethic of letting it all hang out soon leads to confusion and emptiness. It lacks the sustaining power the old values possess by virtue of their *truth*: they have behind them centuries of human experience and reflection on the question of what is the best—most fulfilling, most fully human—life for man. They can answer the urgent query that is the basis of the examined life: How shall I live?

Without the old values, today's young, who have nothing but the new culture, suffer from an inner void that leaves them lonely and incomplete. This issue's two cover stories examine what has filled that hole. Roger Scruton's "Youth Culture's Lament" on page 12 shows how so much of young people's culture, especially pop music, is an attempt, doomed to failure, to create a satisfactory substitute for the meaningful adult social affiliations that the cultural revolution has short-circuited. For preteens, as Kay S. Hymowitz shows in "Tweens: Ten Going On Sixteen" (page 26), parents not only are increasingly absent from the home but also, when they are there, have substituted for the clear rubric of traditional right and wrong the fuzzier cultural-revolution value of self-esteem. Result: into the vacuum where parents and their values used to be has rushed the peer group, which gets its values from an advertising and entertainment industry that well knows how to manipulate the naive longings of the young.

In a related article, Theodore Dalrymple shows in "Uncouth Chic" (page 110) how implacably the elites are making that vacuum even emptier—and how a cultural inheritance of the highest value is squandered in the attempt. The task confronting anyone who seeks the welfare of America's children is to make sure they stop being disinherited of their birthright: families that nurture, values that sustain. •

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Soundings

BIDding *Adieu*

Is New York City big enough for both a ferociously aggressive mayor and a ferociously aggressive private manager of public space? The Giuliani administration's triumphant campaign to oust Dan Biederman as director of one of the city's most successful business improvement districts—the Grand Central Partnership—suggests not. The city's stated reasons for ejecting Biederman are so unpersuasive that they raise the suspicion that the mayor might be souring on the very idea of BIDs—a prospect we should fear.

The ironies in Giuliani's clash with Biederman rise almost to an Aristotelian standard of tragedy. Both men have a fervent commitment to a safe and orderly city. During the eighties, Biederman's breathtaking reclamation of crime-infested Bryant Park as head of the Bryant Park BID exemplified the benefits an unrelenting attention to the idea of public order could bring—an idea candidate Giuliani would exploit and Mayor Giuliani would successfully practice. Biederman's Bryant Park revolution, using private money and private expertise to save a public space, led to his selection as head of two other business improvement districts—the Grand Central Partnership and the 34th Street BID—where he similarly transformed the urban landscape.

But the very traits that led to Biederman's success helped bring about his downfall. Like Mayor Giuliani, Biederman possesses an untiring will to realize his ideas, and he exploits the maximum power available to him under law to do so. He raised over $50 million in debt for capital improvements in his BIDs; he tried to close off streets outside Grand Central Terminal to create a pedestrian haven; he developed his own social services programs for the homeless (generating a huge amount of bad press); and he entertained offers from other areas within and outside the city to create new BIDs. The city now cites such activities as evidence that Biederman is "out of control," even though the city law chartering BIDs explicitly permits several of them.

Biederman's lofty ambitions might not have landed him in such trouble, if he didn't also have a Giuliani-like conviction of his own infallibility. Biederman has alienated public officials with his refusal to take no for an answer and his obvious contempt for decisions that don't go his way. If one commissioner vetoed a Biederman project, Biederman or his staff would seek a contrary decision from a different official—zealous advocacy, but not behavior to endear Biederman to the original naysayer. Add to the mix his $335,000 combined salary, and you have a recipe for growing resentment from his public-sector overseers.

When the Grand Central Partnership's city contract came up for renewal this summer, the administration demanded Biederman's ouster as a condition for it and launched a series of questionable legal threats and shifting accusations against him. The main charges: Biederman ran three BIDs; his salary was too high; he issued debt; and he had too much power. Consider them one by one.

Biederman ran three BIDs. Biederman's detractors seemed to think that if they repeated this observation often enough, they wouldn't have to show why it's improper to run three BIDs. Suddenly solicitous of the city's corporate taxpayers, administration spokesmen worried that Biederman was not giving each BID its due. Directing three BIDs "poses conflict-of-interest questions," one City Hall official charged. But this is ultimately none of the administration's business; if any of Biederman's boards feels he's shortchanging them, they can fire him. Biederman is their employee, after all, not the mayor's. The city didn't even try to present evidence that his three BIDs weren't maintained at an equal level of care. In fact, the interlocking directorates offer the BIDs valuable economies of scale; to split them up, as the mayor seeks, will disrupt their information systems and impose unnecessary costs—undermining the very efficiencies BIDs were formed to achieve.

Biederman's salary was too high. Again, it's none of the city's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

business. The boards who employ Biederman set his salary: the property owners in each BID pay it, not the city. If the boards think they can get better service at a lower price, they will do so; his real-estate-mogul employers aren't neophytes at the bargaining table.

Biederman issued debt. It's certainly odd to see the Giuliani administration wringing its hands over Biederman's bonds, since the city's chartering law for BIDs anticipates bond offerings. Moreover, the city signed off on each transaction. When Biederman tried to raise an additional $10 million in 1996 to participate in the Grand Central Terminal renovation, the administration objected and Biederman had to drop the matter. If the city has second thoughts about the earlier offerings, it can blame only itself.

Biederman had too much power. This was the most amorphous charge of all. Did the city's assertion rest on the number of BIDs Biederman ran, their aggregate size, or some mathematical relation between these two elements? What if the three BIDs had originally been formed as one very large one—would the city have objected less? In fact, no BID, no matter how big, can so much as put up a bench in public space without city approval. Biederman may have had oversight responsibility for a greater swath of Manhattan than any other BID manager, but his power remained only what the city granted him. If Biederman has been an unusually persistent, even annoying, advocate for his causes, the city has always had the last word.

At heart, the "too much power" argument reflects the city's atavistic fear of private enterprise. Any minute, the city seemed to think, Biederman would don a black hat and start charging for admission to 34th Street or Bryant Park. In 1992, then-state senator Manfred Ohrenstein offered a classic formulation of this view: "You've got one man running a private government for public purposes in the center of Manhattan," he maintained. "It's just too much power with no control, no accountability, no review." The charges were fantastic then and remain so today. Biederman possessed only one attribute of government—a city-enforced local taxing power. As for lack of "accountability" or "review," Biederman was—and is—accountable to his boards and subject to constant government review.

HARVEY WANG (3)

But Biederman partly shoveled his own grave. He was, according to one mayoral advisor, "tone-deaf to politics," and he failed to notice the fury growing against him early enough. Eventually, everything came down to a battle of wills between him and the mayor. In such a confrontation, the outcome was never in doubt: the mayor stripped midtown of its passionate impresario.

The saga was more than a personality conflict, however; it was another portent that the mayor may be tiring of BIDs—or at least, growing keen to assert greater control over them. In 1996, following Biederman's failed attempt to raise additional capital, Mayor Giuliani revoked the BIDs' power to issue bonds. Earlier this year, the administration issued a misguided set of rules requiring BIDs to clear their every activity or purchasing

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

decision with the city, potentially destroying the very nimbleness that makes BIDs so successful. And having dictated who was to be the Grand Central BID's new chairman, the mayor comes dangerously close to turning BIDs into banana republics.

The clash with Biederman was probably unavoidable. After all, BIDs formed before Giuliani's arrival in City Hall as a response to city government's failure to provide basic services like trash collection, street sweeping, and the preservation of public order. They continue to offer a standing reproach to government, even to one as reform-minded as the mayor's. The city has come far under Mayor Giuliani, but by no means can it do without BIDs. If the mayor decides that BIDs are superfluous, he should stroll through my neighborhood, which lacks one. The sidewalks and gutters overflow with greasy fast-food containers and gristly chicken bones, torn plastic bags, and other waste, tossed by pedestrians or dumped on sidewalks by vagrants as they rifle through trash cans. Graffiti covers storefronts and mailboxes. Perhaps the city's sanitation department can't do any better than this. If so, it's nowhere near what an excellent business district needs.

When BIDs reach the sophistication and size of those in the city's most prominent districts, they do create—in one limited sense—additional work for City Hall. The landmark BIDs constantly spin out ideas and initiatives that the administration must then oversee and coordinate. But before the city concludes that this is a burden it can do without, it should consider the far greater work BIDs do to save the city, and the enormous surge in private creativity they have let loose. The mayor should welcome such creative ferment and guide it with as light a touch as possible.

—Heather Mac Donald

Civility for All

So far, Mayor Giuliani's civility initiative, announced last January, has one win, one loss. His crackdown on automobile anarchy, especially the damn-the-torpedoes speeding of the city's medallion cabbies, has succeeded unequivocally, as the 36 percent decrease in traffic fatalities between January and June attests. The quickest way to burnish Gotham's quality of life is to enforce the laws against the uncivil behavior that also happens to be illegal. But the mayor's attempt in June to disperse the food vendors who ply their trade on midtown's sidewalks misfired so badly that City Hall scrapped its effort to unclog the pavement. Public opinion understandably saw the measure as unwarranted harshness against unoffending, largely immigrant, micro-entrepreneurs, who fill a necessary economic niche and respectably do the hard work that leads to the American dream. After that failure, the push for civility now seems temporarily stalled.

Here's how to restart it. On Labor Day, one NYPD cop and two city firemen donned blackface in Broad Channel, Queens, to ride on a parade float that demeaned blacks; indeed, one man riding on the float—not a city employee—let himself be pulled behind the float in a shameful satire of the murder of James Byrd Jr. by racist whites who dragged him behind their speeding pickup in Jasper, Texas, in June. When the Queens incident became widely known, the mayor rightly, and immediately, called for the firing of the city employees. Predictably, the New York Civil Liberties Union has leaped to their defense, so the eventual outcome is still up in the air.

The mayor should go a step further, directly linking his response to this deplorable incident to his civility campaign. People who work for the city, he should say—especially those who wear its uniform and so are in the most literal way its representatives—should be held to an especially high standard of behavior. They are to set an example for other citizens of the kind of civility the mayor urges upon all New Yorkers, since the city can't ask citizens for virtues that its own employees don't personify. By publicly shaming these three malefactors, the mayor will make it clear that the civility campaign is not

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

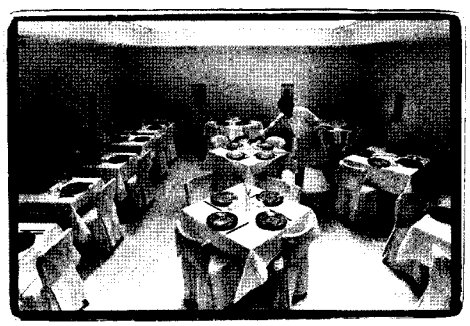
directed merely against powerless, humble people but is aimed at all New Yorkers in an effort to improve the city's quality of life for everyone. He should have taken this uncompromising line with the 50 to 100 firemen who in June, wearing their uniforms and under the very eye of their commanding officer, got tipsy at the Bryant Park Grill after attending a fire department medal awards ceremony at City Hall, and set off a massive and bloody brawl after scaring patrons away with lewd behavior. Though a dozen firemen have been lightly disciplined, none was fired.

It wouldn't be surprising if the mayor felt some reluctance to chastise members of the city's uniformed services in this way. After all, the firemen and especially the cops regularly come in for such unwarranted and irresponsible abuse from self-styled minority leaders and from a broad swath of the press that it is unappealing to seem to join in, and therefore apparently to countenance, the chorus of criticism. But because dedicated and honorable individuals overwhelmingly man the NYPD and the fire department, the mayor shouldn't hesitate figuratively to rip the epaulettes off those who have disgraced the high standards of their services. It really is a way of honoring those standards—and of showing that all New Yorkers must meet a single standard of civility.

— *Myron Magnet*

Nobel Lie

I'm on an e-mail list for a racist, anti-Semitic group called The National Alliance, so I can keep up with the diatribes of one Dr. William Pierce. Pierce's e-mails transcribe his radio broadcasts, "America's Dissident Voices." This man is no mere dissident, though: he thinks the U.S. fought on the wrong side in World War II, that Jews control



the world, and that therefore it's "time for the shedding of blood." Every week he sends out a new rant blaming everything he doesn't like on "the Blacks and the Jews."

One particularly revolting broadcast—or so I naively thought—occurred a few months ago, when he argued that since Bill Clinton is so disgusting, he must be black: "He is not only amoral, but he also lacks the judgment and self-control necessary to conform his behavior to reasonable norms. . . . For [Clinton] it's always been doing what he wants to do at the moment and figuring that later he'll be able to lie himself out of any problems which arise. He behaves as if . . . he has a substantial non-White component in his genetic makeup. He displays the type of mentality characteristic of Blacks."

Imagine my surprise, then, when I picked up the October 5, 1998, *New Yorker* and read Nobel-prizewinning novelist Toni Morrison making a strikingly similar argument: "White skin notwithstanding," she explained, "this is our first black President." And how does Morrison reach this conclusion? "Clinton displays almost every trope of blackness: single-parent household, born poor, working-class, saxophone-playing, McDonald's-and-junk-food-loving boy from Arkansas," she writes. Apparently another "trope of blackness," too: Morrison fiercely defends Clinton's "unpoliced sexuality" from the persecutions of rabid Republicans, who would say to him, as to African-American men in general, "[Y]our expletives belong to us."

Two possibilities arise: either William Pierce's views really are acceptable—*New Yorker* material, even—and my initial revulsion was unjustified, or Toni Morrison has slipped into racism. The first possibility seems far less likely. Pierce is a Holocaust denier and a rabid hater of blacks and Jews—not company Toni Morrison should or, I imagine, would like to keep. So, if she wants to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

grant Clinton some special dispensation, she should do so on grounds other than that he's "really black." Because what she's saying is racist bunk: that we can't hold black men to the same moral standards as the rest of us, since they're just too oversexed. Pierce or, for that matter, David Duke would readily agree.

—Wendy Shalit

Defining Bigotry Down

In a way, the so-called Million Youth March succeeded beyond organizer Khalid Abdul Muhammad's wildest dreams. Though only 6,000 people showed up, weeks later New Yorkers still were arguing over whom to blame for the melée that ended the demonstration—Khalid Muhammad or Mayor Rudolph Giuliani. The hate-spewing Muhammad won a notoriety previously unimaginable, and, fulfilling what was surely one of his aims, the march and its aftermath drove a poisoned wedge between black New Yorkers and the mayor. But almost no one, black or white, had given any serious thought to Harlem's at-risk youth—the ostensible reason for the rally.

Many of the Harlemites who showed up did seem drawn, at least in part, by concern for their community. Some brought children; others carried placards: "We love our youth." Still, a strange emotional disconnection existed between the crowd and the various speakers. Asked if they thought the rally was a hate march, many said no. "It's what you take away from it that counts," one earnest woman told me, as speaker after speaker lashed out at "bastard cops," "blood-sucker Jews," and "boot-licking" black elected officials. "I haven't heard any hate up there," another listener declared and added, "I haven't heard any anti-Semitism." Racial "unity" or divisive hatred: the sad truth is, many in the crowd couldn't tell the difference.

Harlem cries out for attention. But though outsiders might help the neighborhood's failing schools, many of its problems only Harlemites themselves can fix: children having children, deadbeat dads, able-bodied labor-force dropouts, the still-virulent drug trade, the persisting menace of crime. Yet neither Khalid Muhammad nor the other speakers had anything to say about these scourges; instead, they inflamed the crowd with lurid fantasies of a Jim Crow police state.

One speaker told listeners not to inoculate their children, since the white man's vaccines might contain the AIDS virus; another compared the federal government to Pharaoh, killing the black community's first-born male children. As for remedies, the idea of self-help cropped up, but mostly as another form of angry defiance—joining "self-defense" and resisting "our enemy," the police. The impressionable audience listened raptly and chanted on cue: "Black Power," "Fight Back," and—Al Sharpton's trademark phrase—"No Justice, No Peace!" The demonstrators came to help their children and left in hate—thanks to Khalid Muhammad, yes, but thanks also to a political culture in which the stress on group difference has defined bigotry down.

—Tamar Jacoby

Squeezing Lemons

Most New York City public school principals can't lose their jobs, even if they're incompetent, since ironclad union contracts and ill-conceived state tenure laws protect them. Chancellor Rudy Crew, with rare candor, dubbed the ongoing problem of lousy tenured principals "the dance of the lemons." After they failed to get the obstructionist state Legislature to revoke principal tenure earlier this year, Crew and Mayor Rudy Giuliani now want to squeeze the lemons. In contract talks with the principals' union, they've asked the principals to give up tenure rights and work longer hours in return for a sweet 30 percent wage hike.

Linking better pay to greater accountability is a great idea for improving public schools. But principals' union president Donald Singer—like most labor leaders, jealously protective of his members' job security—nixed the offer. Singer then

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

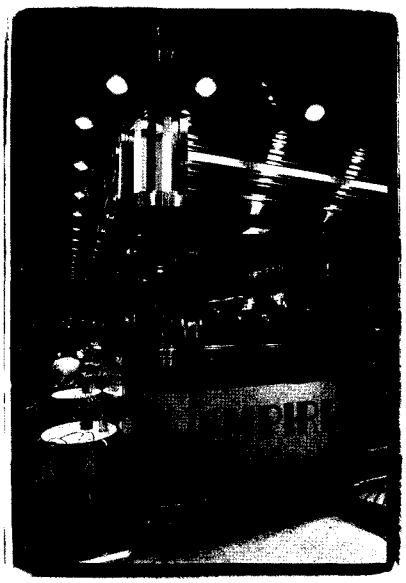
threatened to sue the Board of Education for overtime pay for every hour principals worked over the absurdly short seven-hour-and-20-minute workday set by the old contract, unless a new one was on the way soon.

The principals' union had a strong argument against the Crew-Giuliani offer. You can't hold managers accountable, they might have said, unless they, in turn, can hold their staff accountable. To make that argument, however—as the mayor and chancellor well understood—they would have had to question the tenure rights and contract perks teachers enjoy, including a *six*-hour-and-20-minute workday. But the tiny principals' union, which nominally represents the interests of school managers, is, in fact, in complicity with the much larger union of their employees—against the public. It was the teachers' union, after all, that had the funds to flood the Legislature with powerful lobbyists to kill Giuliani and Crew's bill to end principal tenure. Self-interest, then, dictated that the principals' union wasn't about to argue for a personnel system that holds everyone accountable. New York's public school kids, as usual, are the losers.

—*Sol Stern*

Quality-of-Life Law

Recent breakthroughs in policing have slashed crime in New York City and other urban areas. But another development that promises to boost public safety has gone largely unnoticed. Lawyers have developed a new field that applies the lessons of community policing to law: community safety law. While its practitioners range from "community prosecutors" working for city governments to legal-services lawyers, what unites these diverse lawyers is a willingness



to join the broad-based effort to strengthen communities by targeting quality-of-life crimes.

Community law successes are starting to pile up. For example, Boyd-Booth, an inner-city Baltimore neighborhood, was virtually unlivable, transformed into an open-air drug market by a vicious drug gang. Lawyers from the Community Law Center, a new state-funded legal-services outfit, stepped in and managed to get old housing-code violations enforced at properties the gang controlled, driving the drug dealers from the neighborhood—rather like using tax-evasion charges to jail Al Capone. Boyd-Booth is now one of the city's safest areas. In Portland, Oregon, a community prosecutor put a big dent in the downtown prostitution trade by threatening to enforce building codes to stop hotels from renting rooms by the hour to hookers.

Community law is catching on in New York, too. The NYPD now boasts over 50 precinct-level lawyers who help craft civil remedies to tackle drug-dealing bars, monster car stereos, and other quality-of-life blights. Thanks to them, the NYPD's civil enforcement unit shut down 712 illegal front businesses last year, and cops have seized noisy boom-box cars on the Lower East Side and closed a notorious crack house on Brooklyn's Palmetto Street.

It's far too early to say if the public's desire for safe neighborhoods will become a major concern of law schools and law firms. It is certain, however, that community safety law will take its place next to environmental law and poverty law as a recognized field, complete with law-school courses and professional associations. It's high time for citizens trying to save our neighborhoods to get the legal assistance too long reserved for those trying to destroy them.

—*Roger Conner*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Pop culture's noise and glamour try in vain to fill a gaping void.

ILLUSTRATIONS: ARNOLD ROTH

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Youth Culture's Lament

Roger Scruton

Youth, as we know it from our modern cities, is a new human type—a "race of new mutants," in Leslie Fiedler's words of a generation ago. It has its own language, its own customs, its own territory, even its own economy. It also has its own culture—a culture entirely indifferent to traditional boundaries, loyalties, and forms of learning. That culture is a global force, propagated through media that acknowledge neither locality nor sovereignty in their easygoing capture of the airwaves: "one world, one music," in the slogan adopted by MTV, a station that assembles the words, images, and sounds that are the lingua franca of modern adolescents.

Because youth culture seems to press on modern life from everywhere, it gives the impression of plenitude, of completeness. But despite its ubiquity, at its center is a void, which it continually tries to fill, without success, and continually bemoans, with characteristic inarticulateness.

You can see the effort, the failure, and the inarticulateness most clearly in pop music. On the surface, the words and images lyricize the transgressive conduct that fathers and mothers condemned in the days when disapproval was permitted. But behind the anarchic words another message is encoded, a message that resides not in what is said but in what is not said, in what cannot be said, since the means of saying it have never been supplied. In the effort to give voice to this cryptic message, words float free of grammar and become flotsam on a sea of noise. Witness Nirvana, once the most popular of all popular music groups and still revered by a cult following:

> *Was the season, when a round*
> *Earth can do anything.*
> *What's the reason in around,*
> *If the crown means everything?*

And then: *How uncultured can we get?*

A good question, to which Oasis, a group hailed at its birth as the new Beatles, gives an answer:

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Damn my education, I can't find the words to say
About the things caught in my mind.

Here, encrypted within the routine protest, is a more strangulated cry—a protest against the impossibility of protest. Trapped as he is in a culture that treats articulate utterance as a capitulation to the adult world, the singer can find no words to express what most deeply concerns him. Something is lacking in his world—but he cannot say what. He excites his fans to every kind of artificial ecstasy, knowing that nothing will be changed for them or him, that the void will always remain unfilled. As the Verve so miserably sings: "The drugs don't work."

What is this thing that is missing—this thing for which the singer has no words? The answer lies beyond the lyrics, in the music itself, so strangely different from the music of the past. Rhythm, melody, tone color, and harmony are all "externalized," seeming to come not from within the music itself but from elsewhere. The music clearly has been assembled by procedures that involve little or no invention but that set the music into a machine-like motion, with repetition as the principal device. The percussive sounds that generate the rhythm, for example, have little or no relation to anything else that is happening. Often enough, the music itself draws attention to this disjunction, opening with some mesmeric sound effect or cheesy crooning and then bringing in the drum kit with a barrage of amplified noise, as when a gang lurking on the staircase suddenly breaks down the door.

The construction of melodic lines matches the externality of the rhythm. Pop melodies are assembled from curt phrases, with little internal variation or prolongation and no modulations but only unprepared changes of key. Even when pop aims to be lyrical, it synthesizes melody from trite, standardized units that could be rearranged in any order without losing the effect. It is not that such music is tuneless, but rather that the tune comes from elsewhere—like a meal from the freezer, heated in the microwave.

So, too, with tone color. The electric guitar, of course, owes much of its appeal to the fact that the player straps it on and brandishes it like a dildo. But it is also a machine, which distorts and amplifies the sound, lifting it beyond the realm of human noise. If a machine could sing, it would sound like an electric guitar. So-called techno-music, assembled electronically from a store of recorded and processed sound effects, literally *is* the voice of the machine, triumphing over the human utterance and canceling its lyrical meaning. In such music, we encounter the background noise of modern life—the buzz of traffic, the clamor of airplanes, the whirr of the automated teller machine—suddenly projected into the foreground, so as to fill all the auditory space. However much you listen to this music, you will never hear it as you hear the human voice, not even when it sounds so loudly that you can hear nothing else. You are overhearing the machine, as it discourses in the moral void.

Pop music treats the harmonic dimension of music purely vertically, as a sequence of chords. The idea that chords are composed of notes that stand in horizontal relations to one another and therefore should sing like separate voices has been the acknowledged basis of harmonic organization not only in the classical tradition but also in jazz and all forms of popular music before the present. But this principle has no real meaning for youth, brought up not to construct chords in this way but merely to strum them on a guitar. The chords in modern pop are taken from the shelf and laid out in a sequence. They are lifeless relics of harmony, which do not move but merely replace one another, since no note bears any melodic relation to its successor.

A perfect illustration of this characteristic (and most of the other peculiarities of pop) is "In Bloom," from Nirvana's second album. The chords succeed one another in exactly the arrangement produced by mechanically moving the hand up and down the neck of the guitar and hitting all the strings. The resulting sequence makes melodic sense in none of the voices, save that which generates the paltry tune.

Modern pop rarely comes to a conclusion. The music bursts out, repeats itself, and then fades away. Lacking any harmonic movement of its

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

own, it cannot move toward anything—certainly not toward anything that requires careful preparation, like a cadence. There is, to put it another way, a lack of musical argument— a lack, indeed, of musical thought.

This mechanical, externalized approach to the musical material serves a function. When the accompaniment is deprived of any melodic organization and reprocessed as noise, the singer, rather than the song, becomes the focus of attention. He projects himself and not the melody, emphasizing his particular tone, sentiment, and gesture. The croaks and the groans with which he delivers it become the central features of the melodic line, and the song's one distinguishing feature. The singer stands revealed exactly where the music should be—in stark contrast to the tradition of classical performance, in which the singer is the servant of the music, hiding behind the notes that he produces. The Spice Girls are a recent, exemplary case in point.

The modern pop star does not grow up. He grows sideways, like Mick Jagger or Michael Jackson, becoming waxy and encrusted.

This music is not designed for listening. It is the accompanying soundtrack to a drama, in which the singer, strange as it may seem, becomes something like the sacred presence of a cult, the incarnation of a force beyond music, which visits the world in human form, recruiting followers the way religious leaders recruit their sects. The pop star's appearance onstage is not like that of an orchestra or an actor: it is a "real presence," an incarnation of an otherwordly being, greeted by a release of collective emotion comparable to the Dionysiac orgies depicted by Euripides.

Singers, groups, or lead performers are constrained by their quasi-totemic role. They must be young, sexually attractive, and throbbing with the plaintive voice of youthful desire—like the girlie group called All Saints. Of course, popular musicians have always been idolized—think of Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby, or Cliff Richard. But those old-style icons grew up in time, passed over from adolescence to adulthood, became mellow, avuncular, even religious. The modern pop star does not grow up. He grows sideways, like Mick Jagger or Michael Jackson, becoming waxy and encrusted, as though covered by a much-repainted mask. Such spectral creatures haunt for a while the halls of fame, trailing behind them the ghosts of their vanished fans. And then they disappear.

Modern pop stars often refuse to answer to a normal human name, since to do so would compromise their totemic status. The name must be an icon of the tribe. Sting, R.E.M., Nirvana, Hanson, Madonna, U2, and Oasis are like the species names assumed by tribal groups in order to clarify their social identity, with the difference that it is not biological species that are invoked by the titles, but symbols of disaffected glamour.

Until recently, the song has been detachable from the performer; it has been a musical entity that makes sense in itself; it can be internalized and repeated by the listener, should he have the skill. But modern pop songs are put together so as to be inseparable from the group, so as to be indelibly marked with the group's trademark. Pop fans therefore find themselves deprived of one of the most important gifts of traditional folk music—the gift of song. It is almost impossible to sing the typical pop song unaccompanied and still make musical sense. The best you can do is to impersonate the idol during karaoke night at

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the local bar or club, when you have the benefit of full instrumental backing, amplification, and audience, and can briefly fit yourself into the empty groove where the sacred presence lay. This intense and cathartic experience once over, the fan must step down from the stage and reassume the burden of silence.

In effect, we witness a reversal of the old order of performance. Instead of the performer being the means to present the music, which exists independently in the tradition of song, the music has become the means to present the performer. The music is part of the process whereby a human individual or group is totemized. In consequence,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it has a tendency to lose all musical character. For music, properly constructed, has a life of its own and is always more interesting than the person who performs it. Much as we may love Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald, we love them for their music—not their music for them. And this is music we can perform for ourselves.

This fusion between the singer and his song promotes another and more mysterious fusion—that between the singer and the fan. You can sing the song only by becoming the singer. You are for a moment incarnate in him, as he is in you. But the song is musically inept. Anybody (given the right machinery) can sing it, since nobody can. The fan knows this, and through his idolization of the singer runs the thought: "What has he got that I haven't?" The answer is: Nothing. To the fan in the audience, the gyrating figure on the stage is himself. As he fuses with the totem, the fan is transfigured, relieved at last of his isolation.

The modern adolescent finds himself in a world that has been set in motion; he is beset by noise, by external pressures, and by forces that he cannot control. The pop star is displayed in the same condition, high up on electric wires, the currents of modern life zinging through him, but miraculously unharmed. He is the guarantee of safety, the living symbol that you can live like this forever. His death or decay is simply inconceivable, like the death of Elvis, or, if conceivable, understood as a sacrificial offering, a prelude to resurrection, like the death of Kurt Cobain.

The fan belongs to his pop group, which also belongs to him. Like the totem animal of the tribe, the pop star is an icon of membership, set apart from the everyday world in a sacred space of his own. Hence, pop CDs often contain instructions as to where to write for further information about the singer or group, with a help line and support service, in the form of posters, diary items, and bulletins, like the circulars offered to its congregation by an activist church. The pop group offers membership. It is therefore imperative for the fan—or at least, for a certain kind of fan—to choose his group, and to exalt it above any rivals. The choice is, in the end, arbitrary—or at least, not guided by any criterion of musical merit. But it is a choice that must be made. Thereafter, as Simon Frith has noted, the fan receives any insult to his group as an insult to himself.

Key to the transformation of the pop star into an icon is the music video, perhaps the most important innovation in the sphere of pop since the electric guitar. The video sublimates the star, recycles him as image, more effectively than any painted icon of a saint. It is expressly designed for home consumption and brings the sacred presence into the living room. And it completes the demotion of music, which now becomes background, with the pop star, transfigured into the divine status of the TV commercial, occupying the foreground. The idol has entered the condition familiar from the other forms of youth art. Like Young British Art—the art recently celebrated by the Royal Academy in its exhibition *Sensation* (See "Trash, Violence, and Versace: But Is It Art?" Winter 1998)—he has become the advertisement that advertises itself.

The primitive societies studied by great anthropologists were organic communities, bound by kinship and sustained through myths and rituals devoted to celebrating the idea of the tribe. In such communities, the dead and the unborn were present among the living. Rituals, ceremonies, gods, and stories were the private property of the tribe, designed to enhance and fortify the experience of membership. Birth, marriage, and death were collective, not merely individual, experiences, while the crucial process of acculturation—the transition from raw human material to a responsible adult member of the community—took place among

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rites of passage, trials, and ordeals, through which adolescents cast off their childish willfulness and took on the task of becoming spouses and parents, so as to pass on the tribe's treasures and traditions to the next generation.

In the more complex European societies that shaped the great nineteenth-century anthropologists themselves, there existed a common store of myths, rituals, and ceremonies that created a comparable sense of the divine origin of society and its right to individual sacrifice. Adolescents received instruction in the ancestral religion and learned to respect its rites. Birth, marriage, and death were still collective experiences. Erotic feelings, regarded as the preparations for marriage, were duly sublimated and hemmed in by interdictions. Complex forms of induction marked the transition from adolescent to adult, reinforcing the view that all stages of existence prior to the adult state were but preparations for it. In exploring primitive societies, the Victorians were delighted to discover simpler and more transparent versions of an experience that lay at the heart of their own civilization—the experience of membership, enhanced by a common religion and by the rites of passage that lead to the full adult state, in which the ancestral burden, and privilege, are assumed.

None of that is true of modern adolescents, who are brought into a world from which the old experience of membership, with its ordeals and abstinences, its sacred moments of transition, and its assiduous "framing" of the adult state, has vanished. They are protected from external and internal threat and rescued from the elementary experiences—in particular, the experiences of work and of war—that renew the bond of social membership and give credibility to the adult virtues. They have little or no religious belief, and such religion as they have is detached from the customs and rituals that form a congregation. Television has confined each young person from childhood onward before a box of intriguing platitudes, so that without speaking, acting, or making himself interesting to others, he nevertheless receives a full quota of distractions. The TV provides a common and facile subject of communication, while extinguishing the ability to communicate. The result is a new kind of isolation, as strongly felt in company as when alone.

Moreover, the modern adolescent is heir to the sexual revolution. It is impossible for him to regard erotic feelings as the preliminary to marriage, which he sees as a condition of partial servitude, to be avoided as an unacceptable cost. Sexual release is readily available, and courtship a time-wasting impediment to pleasure. Far from being a commitment in which the voice of future generations makes itself heard, sex is now an intrinsically adolescent experience. The transition from the virgin to the married state has disappeared, and with it the "lyrical" experience of sex, as a yearning for another and higher state of connectedness, to which the hard-won consent of the other is a necessary precondition. All other rites of passage have similarly withered away, since no social institution demands them—or, if it does demand them, it will be avoided as judgmental, hierarchical, or oppressive. The result is an adolescent community that suffers from an accumulating deficit in the experience of membership, while resolutely turning its back on the adult world—the world where membership is offered and received.

All human beings, whatever their condition, are social animals, and can live with themselves only if they also live with others. There is implanted in us the need to join things, to be a part of some larger and justifying enterprise that will ennoble our small endeavors and protect us from the sense that we are ultimately alone. The deficit of membership must therefore be made good, but in another way, without the rite of passage to a higher or more responsible condition. Hence, new forms of "joining in" arise. Unlike armies, schools, scout troops, churches, and charities, these new forms of joining need not involve participation—unless of a rough and undemanding kind that imposes no discipline on those who opt for them. They center on spectacles rather than activities.

The modern adolescent will follow the actions of his favored team, pop group, or idol and adopt those actions as his own. Hence the emergence of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

professional sport as a central drama in popular culture. In Europe, soccer has lost its original character as a form of recreation, in which large numbers of people directly participate, and has become instead a spectacle, through which the fans rehearse their social identity and achieve a kind of substitute form of membership, not as active participants in a real community but as passive respondents to the virtual community of fans. The pop music fan is, in some sense, a part of the group, in just the way that the soccer supporter is a part of his team, bound to it by a mystical bond of membership.

The world displayed in the culture of youth is a world from which the parents have absconded—as these days, they generally have.

Of course, the old tribal feelings are there just below the surface, waiting to be activated and erupting every now and then with their usual tributes to the god of war. Soccer hooligans are not the peculiar and perverse criminals the press paints them as being. They are simply the most literal of soccer fans—the ones who wish to translate the most gratifying experience of membership that has been offered to them into the direct expression of a tribal right.

After all, on both sides of the Atlantic, the tendency has increasingly been to allow adolescents to define their own social order, their own history, their own loyalties, and their own sense of who they are. This is, indeed, the logical outcome of the "child-centered" approach to education recommended by Dewey, enthusiastically adopted by a generation of radical teachers, and described in its most extreme manifestation by Heather Mac Donald in her account, in the last issue of *City Journal*, of a New York high school that offers its pupils a course in hip-hop culture. The fan is trying to rescue himself from the predicament in which adults have placed him—the predicament of having to invent his own identity, in a condition where being young is the only way of being anything.

In a sense, the membership offered to the fan—in which a mesmerized passivity neutralizes the desire for action—is the greatest safeguard we have that modern societies will not fragment into tribal subgroups, contending against one another in the concrete jungle. For when tribal groups emerge in modern conditions, they take the form of teenage gangs, whose initiation ceremonies forbid the transition to the adult world and arrest their members in a stage of rebellion. The first concern of such a gang is to establish a right to territory by violently erasing all rival claims.

The teenage gang is a comprehensible response to a world in which the rites of passage into adulthood are no longer offered or respected. I do not say that such a world is a healthy one. But it is—at least in part—our world, and we have to make the best of it. Youth culture is an attempt to make the best of it—to make oneself at home in a world that is not, in any real sense, a home, since it has ceased to dedicate itself, as a home must dedicate itself, to the task of social reproduction, to the transmission of tradition and responsibility.

Home, after all, is the place where parents are. The world displayed in the culture of youth is a world from which the parents have absconded—as these days, they generally have. This culture aims to present youth as the goal and fulfillment of human life, rather than a transitional phase that must be cast off as an impediment once mature commitment calls. Youth culture promotes experiences that can be obtained without undertaking the burdens of responsibility, work, child rearing, and marriage. Hence sex, and espe-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

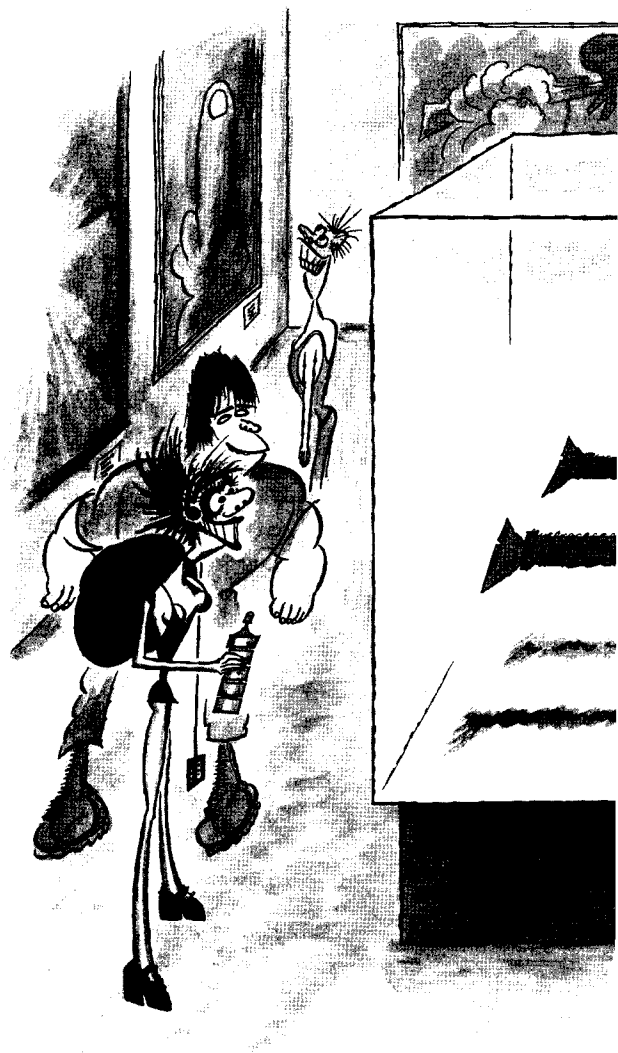
cially sex divorced from any long-term commitment, becomes of paramount importance; so do experiences that involve no cost in terms of education, moral discipline, hardship, or love—the paradigm being drug taking, which has the added advantage that it shuts out the adult world completely and replaces it with a cloud of wishful dreams, the very same wishful dreams that float across the screen of MTV. When youth culture invokes the adult world, it is only to pour scorn on it as a delusive fiction or a source of tyrannical constraint.

Youth culture is therefore inherently transgressive. It announces itself always as radical, disconcerting, infuriating, disorienting, and lawless. The group Prodigy, currently in the charts with "Slap My Bitch Up," makes the point explicitly in its techno-slam number entitled "Their Law"—the law of adults, which is there to be trampled on.

But the explicit incitement contained in such a number should not blind us to the fact that transgression is also institutionalized by pop, so as to become a new conformism. The group Future Bitch, for example, announcing its debut at the Ministry of Sound—the club that is the heart of London's youth culture—declares its aim "to disorientate [*sic*] its audience, pushing the current cultural scene to its limits and toward the millenium [*sic*]." "Future Bitch," the advertisement goes on, "is challenging, radical, disconcerting, stimulating, unpredictable, subliminal, and unprecedented." And what could be more predictable than that?

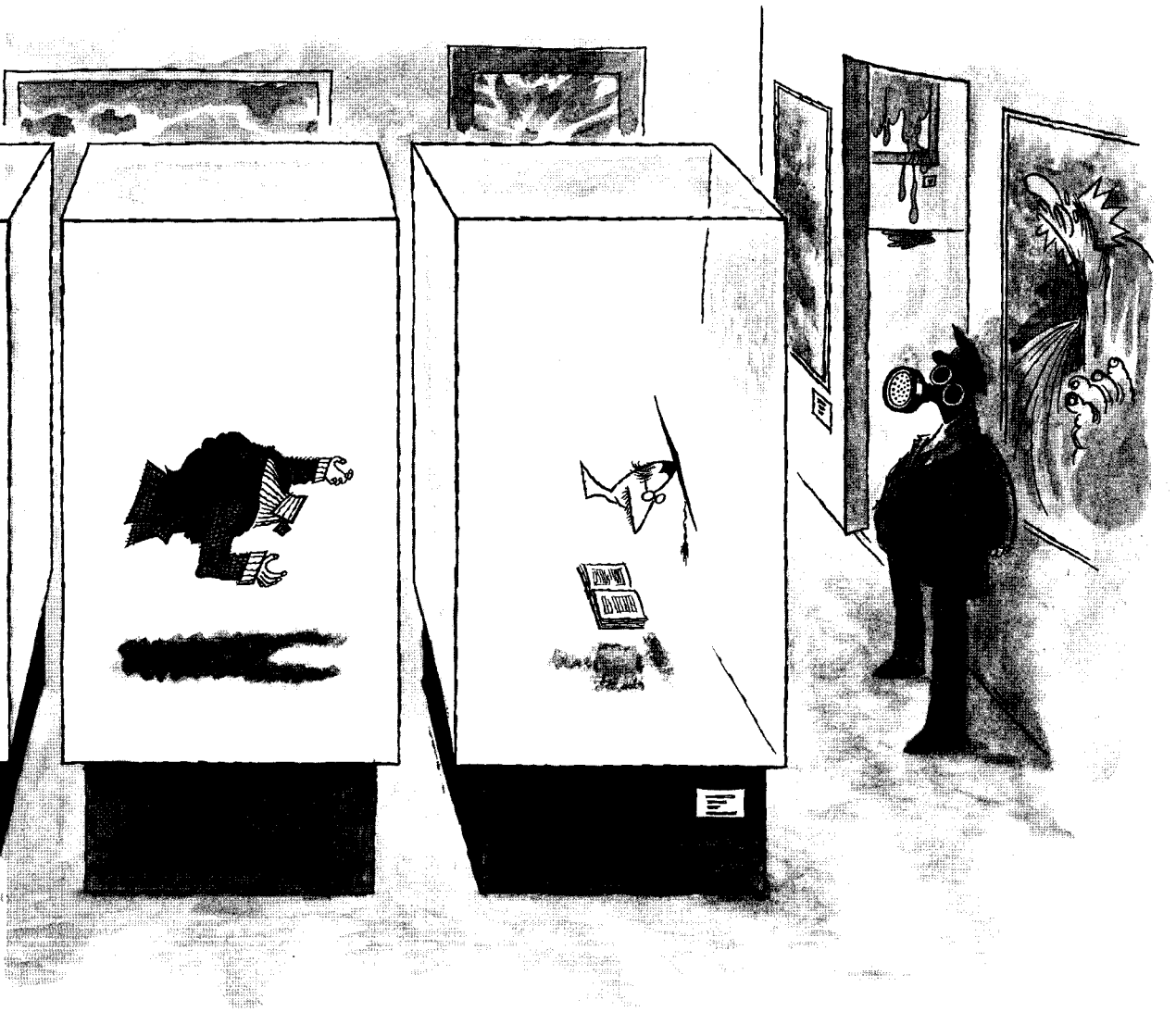
Now, there is an academic industry devoted to representing youth culture in general, and pop in particular, as genuinely subversive, a response to oppression, a voice through which freedom, life, and revolutionary fervor cry from the catacombs of bourgeois culture. If the adepts of "media studies" and "cultural studies" are to be believed, youth finds itself hemmed in at every point by an "official culture" dedicated to denying the validity of its experience. On this view, the profane and anarchic messages of pop are a sign of uncontaminated virtue—gestures of protest against a life-denying social order.

Only years in a university could convince someone of that. For the fact is that the culture of youth is the official culture of Britain and probably of everywhere else. Any criticism of it is greeted by cries of outrage. Every public space in our country is filled by pop; politicians of all persuasions seek endorsement from those who produce and market it; and people with



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ears, who seek the few pockets of silence where they can be alone with their grief, are an endangered species, though one that will never be protected by the conservationists. It is no accident that the owner and director of the Ministry of Sound, James Palumbo, is the son of one of the pillars of the former Establishment, Lord Palumbo, chairman of the Arts Council for many years under the Tories; no accident that he is a friend and advisor to New Labour's spin doctor Peter Mandelson; no accident that the first roll call of guests at No. 10 after the last election included Noel Gallagher of Oasis. The culture of youth seeks and finds legitimacy with the very transgressive gestures that deny that there is any such thing.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Youth culture prides itself on its inclusiveness. That is to say, it removes all barriers to membership, all obstacles in the form of learning, expertise, allusion, doctrine, or moral discipline. For these would be rites of passage, constituting a tacit admission that to be young is not enough, that the world expects something, and that there is a higher stage of existence to which we all must eventually proceed. This very inclusiveness, however, deprives the youth culture of human purpose. It remains locked in its moral void, looking for good causes, spiritual icons, ways of representing itself as legitimate but without crossing the fatal barrier into responsible adulthood. How lucky it was for those who found themselves trapped in this frame of mind that Princess Diana should have achieved the perfect postmodern death and been beatified by Elton John as the holy single-parent family.

Pop culture purveys a kind of institutionalized transgression. Gestures of defiance are now passports to wealth, power, and fame, and a kind of ossified, injured-adolescent rudeness defines the manners of a new state-sponsored elite. Take, for instance, the *Sensation* exhibition from the collection of Charles Saatchi, mentioned earlier. To anyone familiar with the tradition of Western art, this collection might seem to reflect nothing so much as the poor education provided by the art schools, which have failed to inform their students that warmed-over Marcel Duchamp jokes are a poor substitute for inspiration. But that reaction misses the point.

Duchamp's jokes have set the agenda for youth art in our time. They are the raw material of desecration. Young artists must constantly repeat the gesture first made by Duchamp, in order to neutralize the resurgent feeling that there is another world to which art might also be pointing—a world in which labor and sacrifice are sanctified and redeemed by the image of their beauty. Those works in the exhibition that have aroused the greatest indignation are precisely devoted to mocking or dirtying the idea of such a higher world. Art as we knew it is of only marginal significance in the culture of youth. Art as we knew it required knowledge, competence, discipline, and study, all of which were effective reminders of the adult world. The culture of youth, by contrast, makes use of ready-made images and cut-and-paste techniques. It eschews subtlety, allusion, and implication. It is indistinguishable in the end from advertising—with the sole qualification that it has no product to sell except itself.

In this connection, it is worth quoting from a 1997 interview given by Damien Hirst, the doyen of Young British Art, who has excited the critics and bored the rest of us with his pickled sharks and rotting cows: "I spent more time in the art library and watching TV than ever I did in galleries. I used to go into the art library and say to myself: 'I wish I could be like these guys. . . .' Sitting there, looking at 5-by-4 images of paintings, that was the world that I grew up in. At the same time, though, I spent a hell of a lot of time talking about commercials when I was at art school, conversations like, 'My God, did you see the Coalite advert where the dog kisses the cat and then the cat kisses the mouse? Fantastic!' . . . I didn't realize at the time, but that was where the real art was coming from—the rest of it was in the art library going: 'Shit, I wish I could understand all this stuff.' "

That is the authentic voice of the youth culture as it was a few years ago—not quite discarding the high culture of our civilization but reluctant to make the effort to embrace it. Things have moved on since then—partly under the influence of Hirst himself—and the ad, the comic, and the photographic image have now dethroned the painted image and all that it stood for. And it is a law of human nature, confirmed by social revolutions throughout modern history, that old authorities, when they fall from their eminence, are instantly trampled on before being kicked aside.

Hence, there is a direct connection between the art exemplified by Mr. Saatchi's collection and the graffiti that decorate modern cities. Most graffiti vandals use lettering taken from an expressly subliterary source—the comic strip. Moreover, the vast majority of graffiti do not form coherent words or even genuine letters. They are a kind of revenge taken against the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

written word, in a gesture that lays subversive claim to the public space where the written word has for so long been sovereign, but where, thanks to TV and advertising, it is sovereign no more.

The artlessness of graffiti is an act of defiance, a declaration that the knowledge enshrined in the written language is now superfluous. Remember that the written word is the most vivid symbol we possess of adult competence: it is the first obstacle set before the growing child, the original source of adult power and of the mystery of power, which in the hands of adults is propagated and exploited without force or commotion but through signs alone. The graffiti are spells cast against the written word, designed to neutralize its power and liberate the spaces it once occupied. Hence, graffiti become badges and symbols of the new form of membership. They are the heraldic emblems of the gang. Every place disfigured by the gang's insignia is a place reclaimed from the public world, privatized by youth, to become a site for the new kind of membership—membership with no rites of passage and for the time being only.

The high culture of our civilization was a vivid reminder that youth is not enough, that we become fully human only in time.

The high culture of our civilization was a vivid reminder that youth is not enough, that we become fully human only in time and only through learning new things and renouncing old things. Our high culture aimed to capture the attention of its adepts: it addressed the most intense of human interests and required a reverential silence if its message was to be absorbed. This is true of the picture gallery and the concert hall; it is also true of the written and the spoken word.

When broadcasting first was invented, it was conceived—at least in Britain, under the benign jurisdiction of the old BBC—as a way of extending the high culture of the elite to a wider audience, making available aesthetic and educational experiences that would otherwise require effort and expenditure beyond the reach of ordinary people. A radio talk took the form of a lecture addressed to the listeners, from whom it demanded undivided attention. The speaker would prepare his talk meticulously, with attention to style and diction, in order to make the greatest impact. Radio entered people's lives as a new and riveting authority, a voice from the adult world of knowledge, inviting its listeners to improve themselves and to rise to the level of the things they heard.

Essential to the effect was the invisibility of the speaker. He was a disembodied voice, slipping down the airwaves like an angel from heaven, straight into the ears and hearts of the public. Once the speaker became visible, on television, his appearance undermined his angelic authority. If he were a brilliant improviser, he might still be able to stare from the screen and utter an unbroken flow of elevated prose, as Bertrand Russell once did. More likely, however, he would offer only hesitant words and require the constant prompting of an interviewer if he were to sound coherent.

Very soon after the invention of television, it was the interviewer, the person who "fronts" the show, who had secured the initiative. Distinguished people appeared before him only to risk their hard-won authority. Interviewers became debunkers, and one by one the heroes of the national culture submitted themselves to adversarial demolition for the benefit of a public at first incredulous, then amused, and finally indifferent. If a cultured elite still existed, it had

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fallen out of communication with the viewers of TV, since it could not make itself listened to in such a medium but, at best, only heard.

The standard format of TV spread in time to radio, so that radio talks and readings became increasingly rare. Even on Radio 3, the BBC's "highbrow" station, the listener is now seldom addressed directly, with well-rehearsed words designed to elicit his complete attention. Informal dialogue replaces the authoritative utterance, and discussions are conceived in adversarial terms, with every opinion balanced against its opposite and thereby neutralized. Everything transmitted over the airwaves arrives in the ears of the public stripped of its authority, reduced to the private exhalation of a passing speaker. And this speaker has no more weight than the indefinitely many contenders for attention who might have been—but as it happens, were not—called into the studio.

Another way of putting the point is that, through broadcasting, speech becomes a background murmur, with no special claim to our attention and addressed to no one present. The effect is to create a new conception of the public world. The social, cultural, and political elite parade across the stage of broadcasting, chattering inconsequentially, appearing and disappearing like figures in a crowd, endlessly and fruitlessly experimenting with opinions whose significance is exhausted in the moment of their utterance. The educated class steadily loses whatever authority it might have had, dissolved at last in the universal chatter. The public sphere is not the forum of high culture, discipline, or virtue, but merely a special kind of noise: the noise of people who are paid for making it.

In these circumstances, it is hardly possible to convince young people that the adult world is in some way higher, more fulfilling, or more richly mysterious than the world they create through their own resources. All that exists out there is noise, and even if some noises pay more than others, no noise is better or worse than any other. Besides, the noise that pays the most is the noise that hits the charts—and this noise is usually made by young people, whose success arrives with all the suddenness and arbitrariness of a win in the lottery. There can be no compulsion to move to the adult sphere, and no rite of passage that will land you there, since all that you can ever do is to replace one type of noise with another. In such circumstances, the noises made by youth are protected from criticism and given the go-ahead to drown out the unconfident murmurs of the fathers as they trudge away toward extinction.

It is in similar terms that we should understand the dances of modern youth. In almost all tribal communities, dancing has had an important role in reinforcing the communal spirit, particularly in ceremonies of initiation and marriage. It represents an act of surrender to the tribe and its ruling deities. In dancing, we set all purpose aside and allow the spirit and forms of the dance to rule us. At the same time, dancing has a peculiar social intentionality: in the normal case, dancing is a "dancing with," a fitting of one's steps and gestures to the steps and gestures of others.

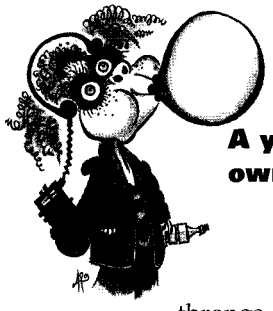
In the old culture of Europe, dancing was therefore a part of courtship—a kind of stylized intimacy in which the sexual allure of the body could be displayed and enjoyed without social catastrophe. For young lovers, dancing was a way of going "part-hog," as Harold Pinter would put it, while behaving with proper decorum.

But it was not only young lovers who danced. Traditional dances—such as the minuet, the jig, and the saraband—were formation dances, in which you changed partners to find yourself dancing with someone in whom you had no sexual interest whatsoever (your grandmother, perhaps). In the Mediterranean, it was even unheard of for the sexes to dance together: the men performed in a troupe, and then the girls, each sex with an eye for the other but decorously removed from physical contact. In this way, dancing became a ceremony in which the community enacted its bid for eternity beneath the stars.

Young people perceive love, sex, and the body differently today; courtesy and courtship have disappeared from their dancing, since they have disappeared from their lives. The idea of dancing

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as an orderly affirmation of community is dead. Dancing has become a social and sexual release, among people who expressly represent themselves in the dance as sexual objects, even when—and especially when—they dance without a partner. Indeed, the concept of the partner—of the one with whom you are dancing, and who agrees to dance after an exchange of courtesies—hardly engages the new reality. You all dance together, and every step or shake or gesture is right, just so long as it feels right. Nor is this new kind of dancing of marginal significance: it is the central episode in the youth culture, the moment when the individual renews his attachment to the group and is raised to a heightened level of excitement and a sense of the rightness of being what he is and doing what he does.



A young person must forge an identity from nothing but his own adolescent experience—the experience of alienation.

The "rave"—in which throngs of drug-fueled young people dance orgiastically to pop music pumped up as loud as it can go—is the Holy Communion of youth, and it is a communion without decorum, in which the distance between people is not transcended but denied.

The anthropologist Arnold van Gennep coined the expression "rites of passage" in 1909, after noticing the important structural analogy between ceremonies of birth, puberty, initiation, marriage, and death. The ceremonies, he argued, involve three components, ordered successively: separation of the individuals or groups from their previous condition; existence on the margin, during which they remain suspended in limbo; and incorporation as participants in their new condition. Thus, initiation into full membership is preceded by a period of alienation, as the youth is cast out from childhood and care and forced to earn the fruits of adult freedom.

Imagine, however, a situation in which the adult world is clouded over: everything pertaining to adulthood has become dark, forbidding, enslaved. The only freedom lies in youth itself. A young person must forge an identity from nothing but his own adolescent experience—the experience of alienation, in which the protection of the adult world has been withdrawn, and nothing put in place of it. The traditional totems, which represent the continuity of the tribe, now lose their significance. The youth must construct his own totem, his own ceremonies of initiation and membership, his own sense of togetherness, while inheriting nothing at all from the expertise and knowledge of his forefathers. His dances must be formless and violent, so that only youth can dance to them; sexual pleasure, the mark of youth, must occupy the foreground of the ritual, but sex must be meticulously divorced from marriage and the birth of children. His totems must be formed in his own image—perpetually young, perpetually transgressive, perpetually incompetent.

As he dances among his kind, such a youth will be conscious of a lack. All this commotion ought to mean something; it ought to be lifting him to a higher plane. But it leaves him exactly where he was—on the margin of society, enjoying a freedom that is empty since it has no goal. He tries to lift himself with drugs and, as a result, sinks further into the void. His protest resolves itself at last in a strangulated cry—a song that sounds like music only when the drumming feet of adolescents sound along with it. And if he discovers words for this song, what can they be but these:

I can't find the words to say
About the things caught in my mind?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Tweens: Ten Going On Sixteen

Kay S. Hymowitz

As the authority of parents wanes, preteens are falling under the sway of peer groups and marketers. The disquieting result: "hip" and "sexy" ten-year-olds.

During the past year my youngest morphed from child to teenager. Down came the posters of adorable puppies and the drawings from art class; up went the airbrushed faces of Leonardo di Caprio and Kate Winslet. CDs of Le Ann Rimes and Paula Cole appeared mysteriously, along with teen fan magazines featuring glowering movie and rock-and-roll hunks with earrings and threatening names like Backstreet Boys. She started reading the newspaper—or at least the movie ads—with all the intensity of a Talmudic scholar, scanning for glimpses of her beloved Leo or, failing that, Matt Damon. As spring approached and younger children skipped past our house on their way to the park, she swigged from a designer-water bottle, wearing the obligatory tank top and denim shorts as she whispered on the phone to friends about games of Truth or Dare. The last rites for her childhood came when, embarrassed at reminders of her foolish past, she pulled a sheet over her years-in-the-making American Girl doll collection, now dead to the world.

So what's new in this dog-bites-man story? Well, as all this was going on, my daughter was ten years old and in the fourth grade.

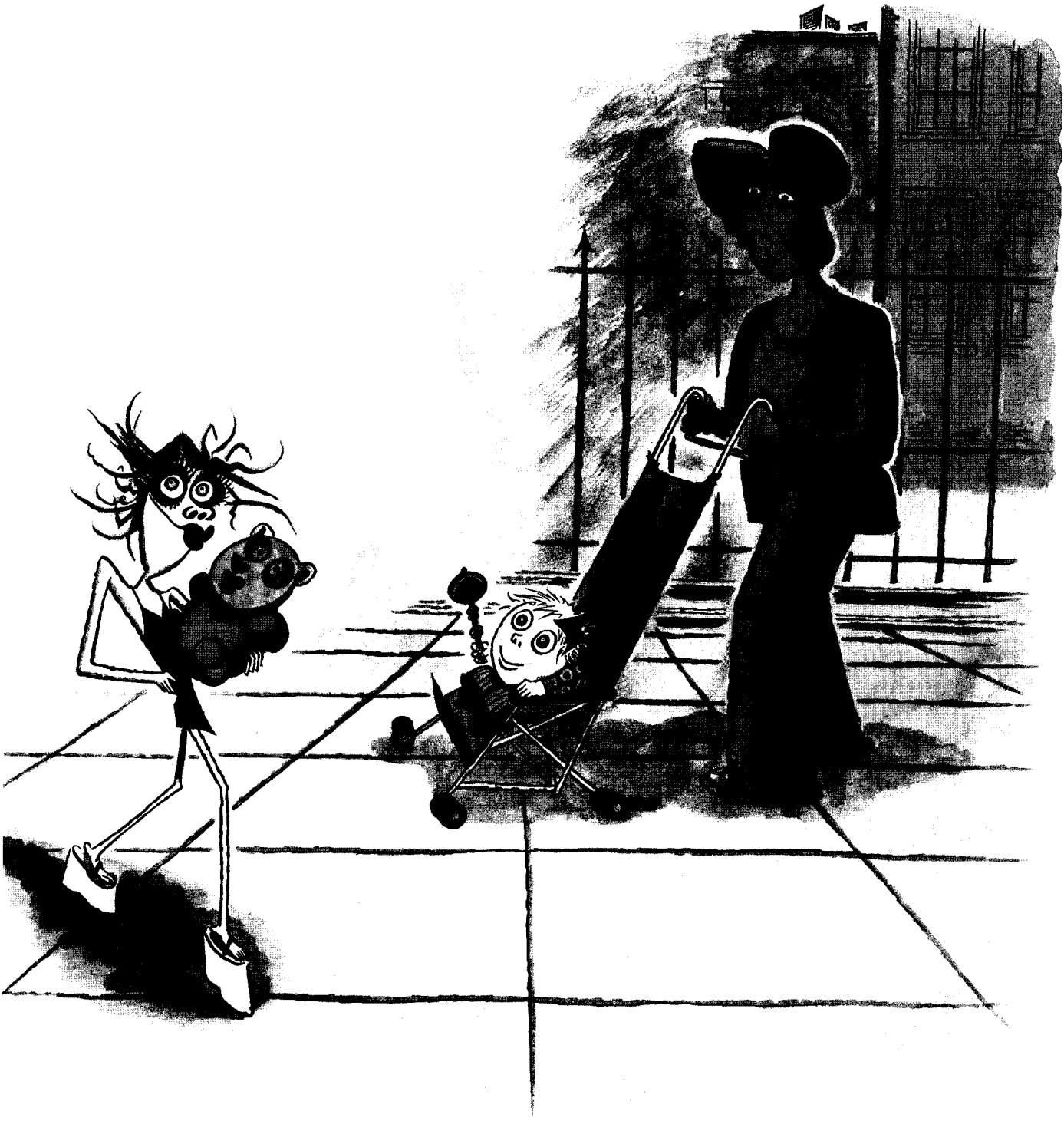
Those who remember their own teenybopper infatuation with Elvis or the Beatles might be inclined to shrug their shoulders as if to say, "It was ever thus." But this is different. Across class lines and throughout the country, elementary and middle-school principals and teachers, child psychologists and psychiatrists, marketing and demographic researchers all confirm the pronouncement of Henry Trevor, middle-school director of the Berkeley Carroll School in Brooklyn, New York: "There is no such thing as preadolescence anymore. Kids are teenagers at ten."

Marketers have a term for this new social animal, kids between eight and 12: they call them "tweens." The name captures the ambiguous reality: though chronologically midway between early childhood and adolescence, this group is leaning more and more toward teen styles, teen attitudes, and, sadly, teen behavior at its most troubling.

The tween phenomenon grows out of a complicated mixture of biology, demography, and the predictable assortment of Bad Ideas.

ILLUSTRATIONS: ARNOLD ROTH

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But putting aside its causes for a moment, the emergence of tweendom carries risks for both young people and society. Eight- to 12-year-olds have an even more wobbly sense of themselves than adolescents; they rely more heavily on others to tell them how to understand the world and how to place themselves in it. Now, for both pragmatic and ideological reasons, they are being increasingly "empowered" to do this on their own, which leaves them highly vulnerable both to a vulgar and sensation-driven marketplace and to the crass authority of their immature peers. In tweens, we can see the future of our society taking shape, and it's not at all clear how it's going to work.

Perhaps the most striking evidence for the tweening of children comes from market researchers. "There's no question there's a deep trend, not a passing fad, toward kids getting older younger," says research psychologist Michael Cohen of Arc Consulting, a public policy, education, and marketing research firm in New York. "This is not just on the coasts. There are no real differences geographically." It seems my daughter's last rites for her American Girl dolls were a perfect symbol not just for her own childhood but for childhood, period. The Toy Manufacturers of America Factbook states that, where once the industry could count on kids between birth and 14 as their target market, today it is only birth to ten. "In the last ten years we've seen a rapid development of upper-age children," says Bruce Friend, vice president of worldwide research and planning for Nickelodeon, a cable channel aimed at kids. "The 12- to 14-year-olds of yesterday are the ten to 12s of today." The rise of the preteen teen is "the biggest trend we've seen."

Scorning any symbols of their immaturity, tweens now cultivate a self-image that emphasizes sophistication. The Nickelodeon-Yankelovich Youth Monitor found that by the time they are 12, children describe themselves as "flirtatious, sexy, trendy, athletic, cool." Nickelodeon's Bruce Friend reports that by 11, children in focus groups say they no longer even think of themselves as children.

They're very concerned with their "look," Friend says, even more so than older teens. Sprouting up everywhere are clothing stores like the chain Limited Too and the catalog company Delia, geared toward tween girls who scorn old-fashioned, little-girl flowers, ruffles, white socks, and Mary Janes in favor of the cool—black minidresses and platform shoes. In Toronto a tween store called Ch!ckaboom, which offers a manicurist and tween singing-star Jewel on the sound system, hypes itself as "an adventure playground where girls can hang out, have fun, and go nuts shopping." A recent article on tween fashion in the *New York Times* quoted one ten-year-old sophisticate primping in a changing room at Saks Fifth Avenue: "It's black and I love to wear black. It goes with everything."

Less cosmopolitan tweens may eschew the understated little black dress, but they are fashion mad in their own way. Teachers complain of ten- or 11-year-old girls arriving at school looking like madams, in full cosmetic regalia, with streaked hair, platform shoes, and midriff-revealing shirts. Barbara Kapetanakes, a psychologist at a conservative Jewish day school in New York, describes her students' skirts as being about "the size of a belt." Kapetanakes says she was told to dress respectfully on Fridays, the eve of the Jewish Sabbath, which she did by donning a long skirt and a modest blouse. Her students, on the other hand, showed their respect by looking "like they should be hanging around the West Side Highway," where prostitutes ply their trade.

Lottie Sims, a computer teacher in a Miami middle school, says that the hooker look for tweens is fanning strong support for uniforms in her district. But uniforms and tank-top bans won't solve the problem of painted young ladies. "You can count on one hand the girls not wearing makeup," Sims says. "Their parents don't even know. They arrive at school with huge bags of lipstick and hair spray, and head straight to the girls' room."

Though the tweening of youth affects girls more visibly than boys, especially since boys mature more slowly, boys are by no means immune to these obsessions. Once upon a time, about ten years ago, fifth- and sixth-grade boys were about as fashion-conscious as their pet hamsters. But a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

growing minority have begun trading in their baseball cards for hair mousse and baggy jeans. In some places, $200 jackets, emblazoned with sports logos like the warm-up gear of professional atheletes, are *de rigueur*; in others, the preppy look is popular among the majority, while the more daring go for the hipper style of pierced ears, fade haircuts, or ponytails. Often these tween peacocks strut through their middle-school hallways taunting those who have yet to catch on to the cool look.

Cosmetics companies have found a bonanza among those we once thought of as children. The Tinkerbell Company has sold cosmetics to girls ages four to ten since the late fifties. For the most part, these were really more like toys, props for dress-up games and naive attempts to imitate Mommy. Today Tinkerbell has grown up and gone to Soho. New products for the spring of 1998 included roll-on body glitter and something called "hair mascara," a kind of roll-on hair color, in what the company has described as "edgy colors"—neon green, bright blue, and purple. AM Cosmetics has introduced the Sweet Georgia Brown line for tweens. It includes body paints and scented body oils with come-hither names like Vanilla Vibe and Follow Me Boy. Soon, thanks to the Cincinnati design firm Libby Peszyk Kattiman, after she has massaged her body with Follow Me Boy oil, your little darling will also be able to slip into some tween-sized bikini panties.

By the time they are 12, children describe themselves as "flirtatious, sexy, trendy, athletic, cool."

After completing her toilette, your edgy little girl might want to take in a movie with a baggy-panted, Niked dude. They won't bother with pictures aimed at them, though; nine to 12s are snubbing films like *Madeline* or *Harriet the Spy*. Edgy tweens want cool, hip, and sexy. "When I hear parents complain about no films for their young kids, it kind of gets to me," says Roger Birnbaum, producer of such films for preteens as *Angels in the Outfield* and *Rocket Man*, "because when you make those kinds of films, they don't take their kids to see them." They prefer R-rated films like *Object of My Affection*, about a young woman who falls in love with a homosexual; or *Scream*, the horror story about a serial killer hunting down young women; or the soap opera *Titanic*, which succeeded so hugely because teen and tween girls went back to watch 3½ hours of Leonardo di Caprio three, four, even five times. "These are different times," concedes Stanley Jaffe, one of the producers of the new *Madeline*, in response to doubts about the potential of his movie, "and you can't go into it thinking you're making a children's film." In other words, there are no children's movies here.

The same goes for other media. Magazine publishers—by the early nineties magazines like *Sports Illustrated for Kids* and *Nickelodeon* were beginning to replace comics as the print entertainment of choice for children—say that warm and cutesy images are out; cool is in. Celebrities like actor Will Smith and rapper Puff Daddy adorn the cover of almost every issue of *Nickelodeon*, the cable channel's magazine geared toward eight- to 14-year-olds. Editor Laura Galen says that whenever her magazine reduces its entertainment coverage, tween complaints flood the mail. By the late eighties, tweens helped launch the new genre of what might be called peach-fuzz rock—bands made up of barely pubescent male sex-symbols-in-training. At that time, girls were going screaming mad for a group called New Kids on the Block; after their voices changed and their beards grew in, New Kids lost out to a group called Hanson, now filling stadiums with panting tweens.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Danny Goldberg, chief executive officer of Mercury Records, which produces Hanson, recalls that teen girls have had immense influence on the music business since the days of Frank Sinatra. "But now," he says, "the teenage years seem to start at eight or nine in terms of entertainment tastes. The emotions are kicking in earlier. It's a huge audience."

No aspect of children's lives seems beyond the reach of tween style. Even the Girl Scouts of America have had to change their image. In 1989 the organization commissioned a new MTV-style ad, with rap music and an appearance by tween lust-object Johnny Depp. Ellen Christie, a media specialist for the organization, said it had to "get away from the uniformed, goody-goody image and show that Girl Scouts are a fun, mature, cool place to be." The Girl Scouts?

Those who seek comfort in the idea that the tweening of childhood is merely a matter of fashion—who maybe even find their lip-synching, hip-swaying little boy or girl kind of cute—might want to think twice. There are disturbing signs that tweens are not only eschewing the goody-goody childhood image but its substance as well.

Tweens are demonstrating many of the deviant behaviors we usually associate with the raging hormones of adolescence. "Ninth and tenth grade used to be the starting point for a lot of what we call risk behaviors," says Brooklyn middle-school head Henry Trevor, as he traces the downward trajectory of deviancy many veteran educators observe. "Fifteen years ago they moved into the eighth grade. Now it's seventh grade. The age at which kids picture themselves starting this kind of activity has gone down."

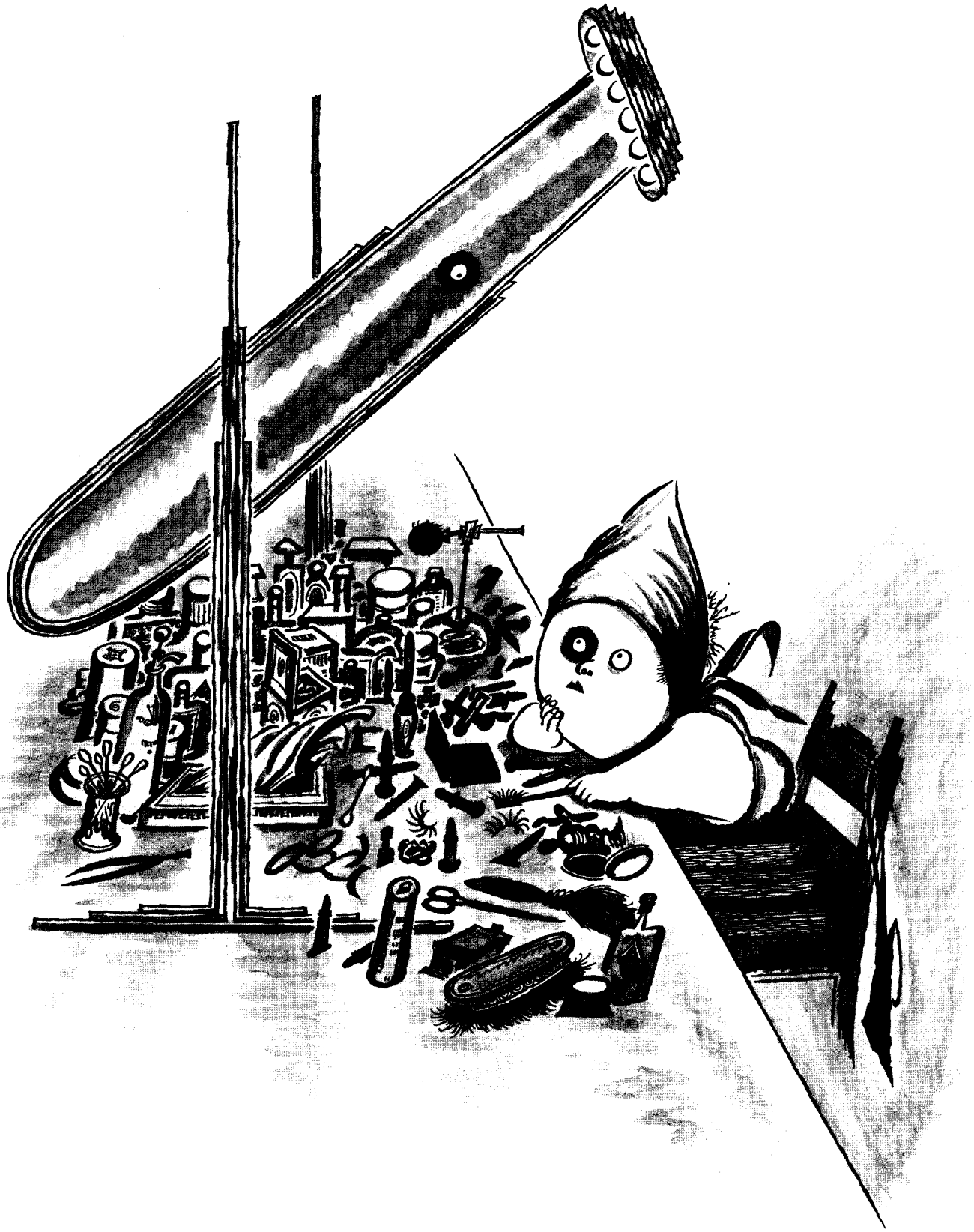
Hard data about how tweens are defining deviancy down is sketchy. For one thing, most studies of risk behavior begin with 15-year-olds. High school kids give fairly reliable answers in surveys, but middle-school kids are often confusingly inconsistent. As for ten-year-olds, until recently it seemed absurd for researchers to interview them about their sexual activity and drug use.

The clearest evidence of tweendom's darker side concerns crime. Although children under 15 still represent a minority of juvenile arrests, their numbers grew disproportionately in the past 20 years. According to a report by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, "offenders under age 15 represent the leading edge of the juvenile crime problem, and their numbers are growing." Moreover, the crimes committed by younger teens and preteens are growing in severity. "Person offenses, which once constituted 16 percent of the total court cases for this age group," continues the report, "now constitute 25 percent." Headline grabbers—like Nathaniel Abraham of Pontiac, Michigan, an 11-year-old who stole a rifle from a neighbor's garage and went on a shooting spree in October 1997, randomly killing a teenager coming out of a store; and 11-year-old Andrew Golden, who, with his 13-year-old partner, killed four children and one teacher at his middle school in Jonesboro, Arkansas—are extreme, exceptional cases, but alas, they are part of a growing trend toward preteen violent crime.

Though the absolute numbers remain quite small, suicide among tweens more than doubled between 1979 and 1995. Less lurid but still significant, a London-based child advocacy group called Kidscape announced in March a 55 percent increase over the previous 18 months in calls reporting tween girl-on-girl bullying, including several incidents involving serious injuries.

The evidence on tween sex presents a troubling picture, too. Despite a decrease among older teens for the first time since records have been kept, sexual activity among tweens increased during that period. It seems that kids who are having sex are doing so at earlier ages. Between 1988 and 1995, the proportion of girls saying they began sex before 15 rose from 11 percent to 19 percent. (For boys, the number remained stable, at 21 percent.) This means that approximately one in five middle-school kids is sexually active. Christie Hogan, a middle-school counselor for 20 years in Louisville, Kentucky, says: "We're beginning to see a few pregnant sixth-graders." Many of the principals and counselors I spoke with reported a small but striking minority of sexually active seventh-graders.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Equally striking, though less easily tabulated, are other sorts of what Michael Thompson, an educational consultant and co-author of the forthcoming *Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys*, calls "fairly sophisticated sexual contact" short of intercourse among tweens. Thompson hears from seventh- and eighth-graders a lot of talk about oral sex, which they don't think of as sex; "for them, it's just fooling around," he says. A surprising amount of this is initiated by girls, Thompson believes. He tells the story of a seventh-grade boy who had his first sexual experience when an eighth-grade girl offered to service him in this way. "The boy wasn't even past puberty yet. He described the experience as not all that exciting but 'sort of interesting.'"

Certainly the days of the tentative and giggly preadolescent seem to be passing. Middle-school principals report having to deal with miniskirted 12-year-olds "draping themselves over boys" or patting their behinds in the hallways, while 11-year-old boys taunt girls about their breasts and rumors about their own and even their parents' sexual proclivities. Tweens have even given new connotations to the word "playground": one fifth-grade teacher from southwestern Ohio told me of two youngsters discovered in the bushes during recess.

Drugs and alcohol are also seeping into tween culture. The past six years have seen more than a doubling of the number of eighth-graders who

Of Course Parents Matter

Your tween wants to pierce her navel and hang out till midnight on the street corner. Should you let her go ahead, have a talk about how she is too young to be making decisions about these things, or lock her in her room until she turns 25? It doesn't matter, shrugs Judith Rich Harris, author of *The Nurture Assumption: Why Children Turn Out the Way They Do; Parents Matter Less Than You Think and Peers Matter More.*

The publishing fad of the season, winning a cover story in *Newsweek*, a long article in *The New Yorker* ("Do Parents Matter?"), and a pronouncement from MIT linguist Steven Pinker as "a turning point in the history of psychology," *The Nurture Assumption* argues that for far too long we have labored under the mistaken assumption that parents have some influence over the way their children turn out. Remember the 3 AM pacing with your colicky infant, the piano recitals for which you declined an important business meeting, the trip to the Cooperstown Baseball Hall of Fame when you could have been in Paris on a second honeymoon? You're a chump. According to Harris, your children are shaped by their genes and socialized by their peers, and none of your solicitude matters.

Had Harris not so exaggerated her thesis as tacitly to justify child neglect, she might have had something to teach us. In contrast to the cognitive psychologists who have dominated the academy for the last 30 years, she uses the insights of group and social psychology to remind us that children are social imitators as much as isolate problem solvers. She explains the failure of bilingual education, for instance, as stemming from kids' desire to be like their friends: if their friends in bilingual ed are speaking mostly Spanish, they'll speak Spanish. She has some interesting advice for educators about the importance of uniting children—through uniforms and interschool sports, for example—so that they are less likely to break up into cliques, some of them inevitably anti-school.

Many critics, including luminaries like Harvard psychologist Jerome Kagan, have made the most important rejoinder to Harris: that parents matter hugely. But they matter in ways beyond even what Harris's fiercest critics realize. For through their supportive presence, parents have the power to protect children from the peer group that Harris sees as so invincible. In fact, Americans have traditionally emphasized the nuclear family in part

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

smoke marijuana (10 percent today) and those who no longer see it as dangerous. "The stigma isn't there the way it was ten years ago," says Dan Kindlon, assistant professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and co-author with Michael Thompson of *Raising Cain*. "Then it was the fringe group smoking pot. You were looked at strangely. Now the fringe group is using LSD."

Aside from sex, drugs, and rock and roll, another teen problem—eating disorders—is also beginning to affect younger kids. This behavior grows out of premature fashion-consciousness, which has an even more pernicious effect on tweens than on teens, because, by definition, younger kids have a more vulnerable and insecure self-image. Therapists say they are seeing a growing number of anorexics and obsessive dieters even among late-elementary-school girls. "You go on Internet chat rooms and find ten- and 11-year-olds who know every [fashion] model and every statistic about them," says Nancy Kolodny, a Connecticut-based therapist and author of *When Food's a Foe: How You Can Confront and Conquer Your Eating Disorder*. "Kate Moss is their god. They can tell if she's lost a few pounds or gained a few. If a powerful kid is talking about this stuff at school, it has a big effect."

What change in our social ecology has led to the emergence of tweens? Many note that kids are

because they believed children could develop more fully when they had refuge from dictatorial peers and siblings, and when parents—not the street or the boarding school—shaped their outlook and values. Americans consciously eschewed the approach of more traditional cultures, where older children take charge of socializing the younger and which Harris seems to take as the norm. Arrangements like this, according to Bruno Bettelheim in his celebrated work on kibbutz children, are likely to produce inflexibly conformist adults.

Harris's own history, which she recounts with enough bitterness to make even her fellow Freud-haters wonder about her motives in writing this book, unwittingly reveals how important a sanctuary her parents provided. Only when she moves to a wealthy suburb, where she shuns her snobby peers, does she turn inward and become the curious, high-achieving girl who will go on to write a headline-grabbing book of her own. That metamorphosis, she reports, required "years of solitude, of seeking solace in books"—in the protected privacy of her home, one can assume.

Today Harris is glibly willing to sacrifice the family arrangement that served her so well to promote the comfort of today's parents. "I want to tell parents that it's all right," she was quoted as saying in *The New Yorker*. "If they knew that it was O.K. to have a child and let it be reared by a nanny or put it in a day-care center or even to send it to a boarding school, maybe they'd believe that it would be O.K. to have a kid. You can have a kid without having to devote your entire life—your entire emotional expenditure for the next 20 years."

In a society where 52 percent of mothers with children under five are working, where an estimated 5 to 7 million kids come home to an empty house, and where educators are finding evidence of growing inattention toward children, this is like praying for snow in Siberia.

In the end, Harris's book is not science so much as self-fulfilling prophecy. Her implicit support for parental absence and indifference is nothing less than a foolproof recipe for empowering the peer groups she believes to be unavoidable. In fact, if she would open her eyes, she would find that her utopia of detached parents and the potent kid tribe has already arrived—and it augurs ill.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reaching puberty at earlier ages, but while earlier physical maturation may play a small role in defining adolescence down, its importance tends to be overstated. True, the average age at which girls begin to menstruate has fallen from 13 to between 11 and 12 ½ today, but the very gradualness of this change means that 12-year-olds have been living inside near-adult bodies for many decades without feeling impelled to build up a cosmetics arsenal or head for the bushes at recess. In fact, some experts believe that the very years that have witnessed the rise of the tween have also seen the age of first menstruation stabilize. Further, teachers and principals on the front lines see no clear correlation between physical and social maturation. Plenty of budding girls and bulking boys have not put away childish things, while an abundance of girls with flat chests and boys with squeaky voices ape the body language and fashions of their older siblings.

"Kids wear sexually provocative clothes at nine because their parents buy them provocative clothes, not because of their hormones," Robert L. Johnson, director of adolescent and young-adult medicine at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, told me. "A lot of journalists call me to explain some of these things, and they want a good sound bite like 'raging hormones' rather than a complex series of social factors."

Of course, the causes are complex, and most people working with tweens know it. In my conversations with educators and child psychologists who work primarily with middle-class kids nationwide, two major and fairly predictable themes emerged: a sexualized and glitzy media-driven marketplace and absentee parents. What has been less commonly recognized is that at this age, the two causes combine to augment the authority of the peer group, which in turn both weakens the influence of parents and reinforces the power of the media. Taken together, parental absence, the market, and the peer group form a vicious circle that works to distort the development of youngsters.

Much of the media attention about parents working away from home for long hours has focused on infants and toddlers, but the effect of the postmodern domestic routine on a nine- or ten-year-old merits equal concern. The youngest children, after all, have continual adult attention, from baby-sitters or day-care attendants or after-school counselors. But as their children reach the age of eight or nine, many parents, after years of juggling schedules and panics over last-minute sore throats and stomachaches, breathe a sigh of relief as they begin to see growing signs of competence and common sense in their youngsters. Understandably concluding that their children are ready to take more responsibility for themselves, they place a list of emergency numbers on the refrigerator, arrange for a routine after-school phone call, and hand over the keys to the house.

In most people's minds, this sort of arrangement—children alone a few hours after school—is what we mean by latchkey kids. But latchkey kids come in many varieties. According to the educators I spoke with, many youngsters are leaving for school from an empty house after eating breakfast alone. Parents who can afford it will sometimes hand their children $3 and tell them to pick up juice and a muffin on their way to school. Others have their children pick up fast food or frozen meals for dinner—which a small but sad minority will eat with only Bart Simpson or the local TV newscaster for company.

Almost without exception, the principals and teachers I spoke with describe a pervasive loneliness among tweens. "The most common complaint I hear," says Christie Hogan, "is, 'My mom doesn't care what I do. She's never home. She doesn't even *know* what I do.'" Although the loneliest and most estranged kids don't talk to counselors and can't even be coaxed into after-school programs when they are available, the more resourceful and socially well-adjusted children stay after school whether or not there is a formal program, hanging around popular teachers and counselors. "We have to shoo them home at six sometimes," recounts one New York City middle-school director. "They don't want to go home. No one's there."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Another, more subtly noxious consequence of the loss of family life has been less commonly understood: the expanding authority of a rigidly hierarchical and materialistic peer group. Kids, like nature, abhor a vacuum, and the power of the school peer group grows luxuriantly in soil left fallow by a rootless home life. With no one home, today's tween is captive to an age-segregated peer group whose inflexible customs and mall-driven ideals are too often the only ones he knows.

Many educators I talked with believe that kids are forming cliques earlier than ever, in the fifth and sixth grades rather than the seventh and eighth, as was the case until recently. Researchers are finding the same thing, as reported, for example, in a recent study published this year entitled *Peer Power: Culture and Identity* by Patricia A. Adler with Peter Adler.

These peer groups should not be confused with simple childhood friendships. They are powerful and harsh mechanisms for making kids conform to the crudest, most superficial values. By late elementary school, according to *Peer Power*, boys understand that their popularity depends on "toughness, troublemaking, domination, coolness, and interpersonal bragging and sparring skills." Girls, on the other hand, "deriv[e] their status from their success at grooming, clothes, and other appearance-related variables; . . . [their] romantic success as measured through popularity and going with boys; affluence and its correlates of material possessions and leisure pursuits." Educators repeatedly note how harsh tweens are toward classmates who wear the wrong brand of sneakers or listen to yesterday's music. Childhood cruelty, always latent, finds an outlet in enforcing the rigid fashion laws of the in-group, whose dominion is now relatively unchallenged by parents and outside peers.

Paradoxically, then, while the tween has less company, he also has less privacy. Hannah Arendt once observed that if you think adults can be authoritarian in their dealings with children, you ought to see the peer group in action. Middle school can be a quasi-Orwellian world, where each child is under continual surveillance by his peers, who evaluate the way he walks, the way he looks, the people he talks to, the number of times he raises his hand in class, the grade he got on his science project. If two kids become romantically linked, their doings are communal property. Each phone call, kiss, or grope is reported, judged, and—in the case of boys, at any rate—simultaneously ridiculed and urged onward by the group leaders. "You kissing her?" they taunt, according to Patricia Hersch in her recent study entitled *A Tribe Apart*. "You get her in bed or something?" Not that things are better if you get rid of the boys. According to one fifth-grade teacher at a private New York City girls' school, students are frequently so wrought up about the vicissitudes of friendships within their group that they can't do their math or English.

Add to this hothouse a glamour- and celebrity-mad tween market-culture, and things get even steamier. In fact, both parental absence and the powerful peer group are intricately connected to the rise of a burgeoning tween market. To be sure, candy, toy, and cereal manufacturers had long known the power of tween cravings before they even defined this new niche group. But tweens really began to catch the eye of businesses around the mid-eighties, a time when, paradoxically, their absolute numbers were falling. The reason was simple. Market research began to reveal that more and more children this age were shopping for their own clothes, shoes, accessories, drugstore items—even for the family groceries.

Jordache Jeans was one of the first companies to spot the trend. "My customers are kids who can walk into a store with either their own money or their mothers'," explained the company's director of advertising at the time. "The dependent days of tugging on Mom or Dad's sleeve are over." Jordache celebrated the new era with ads befitting a revolution. Ignoring—or rather, scorning—parents, they appealed directly to kids who had money in their pockets and puerile dreams of sophistication in their heads. Parents found nothing amusing in seeing jean-clad youngsters on TV, saying things like "Have you ever seen your parents naked?" and "I hate my mother. She's prettier than me," and after many complaints, Jordache pulled the plug.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Though today's tween ads downplay the shock effect, they take the same fundamental approach: kids are on their own, is the premise; flatter them as hip and aware almost-teens rather than out-of-it little kids—as independent, sophisticated consumers with their own language, music, and fashion.

Anyone who remembers high school will recall many of these dynamics. But it is important to recognize that the combination of isolation from adults, peer cruelty, and fantasies of sophistication, though always a danger to the alienated teenager, is especially taxing to the fragile ego of the preadolescent. With less life experience and even less self-awareness (if that's possible) than their teenage brothers and sisters, preadolescents have fewer internal resources to fall back on. As Helen Colvin, a middle-school science teacher from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, explains: "These kids have two years less time to become a firm person. That's two years less time to discover what they are, what they believe, to experiment with identity. Instead, they just want to be like their friends."

Today's tween is captive to an age-segregated peer group whose mall-driven ideals are too often the only ones he knows.

How do parents view all this? For while they may be out of the house for long hours, parents still have the capacity to break, or at least loosen, the choke hold of the peer group. Many parents negotiate diplomatic compromises, giving in on lipstick, say, while holding the line on pierced navels and quietly trying to represent alternatives. But a surprising number of parents, far from seeking to undermine their children's tweenishness, are enablers of it. When Jim Alloy, principal of Fox Lane Middle School in Bedford, New York, tried to ban tank tops, he was beset by a number of irate parents who accused him of discriminating against girls. Other educators marvel at the number of boys whose parents not only buy them expensive Starter jackets but immediately buy them another one if, as so often happens, they lose it.

Many parents are pleased to see their children hip to the market. "I'm glad my girls respond to fashion," said one mother of tweens in a recent *New York Times* article on tween fashion sense. "Trends aren't something you should learn about all of a sudden when you're in college." Another mother frowned over her seven-year-old's choice of a smocked dress as "too babyish." Nor does the enthusiasm for precocity stop with leopard-print tops and thigh-slit black skirts. I sat in amazement at a summer-camp performance this summer as a group of about 30 tweens sang a medley of rock-and-roll songs. The girls in their bare midriffs and miniskirts shimmied and vamped for the pleasure of their upper-middle-class parents, who whooped and hollered like revelers at a strip joint.

Of course, just because they like rock and roll doesn't mean these parents are trying to push their kids into sex and drugs or, for that matter, alcohol and anorexia. Doubtless, many of them are panicky at the prospect of adolescence and all its dangers. Still, their enthusiasm for their children's pseudosophistication betrays a deep confusion about their own role.

The one theme that comes through loud and clear in talking to educators and therapists is that, with parents and their tween children, it's the blind leading the blind. "I'm hearing statements like, 'What can I do? I can't make him read,'" says one director of a New York City private middle school. "And the child is in fifth grade. What does it mean that an adult feels he cannot make a ten-year-old do something?" A middle-school principal from Putnam County, New York, concurs: "I used

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to say to a kid behaving rudely, 'Young man, would you speak that way at home?' and he would hang his head and say, 'No.' Now I ask a kid, and he looks surprised and says, 'Yeah.'"

It's too simple to trace the trend toward passive parenting back to the time and energy deficits experienced by most working parents. The reluctance to guide and shape tween behavior is as much an ideological as a practical matter. Parents are suffering from a heavy diet of self-esteem talk. In their minds, to force a child to speak politely, to make him read, to punish him for being out of line, is to threaten his most primary need—to express himself. "You'll damage his self-esteem," principals and teachers often hear from parents of children who face discipline for troublemaking.

Though the most influential recent works on preteens and early adolescents, by feminist-inspired child specialists like Carol Gilligan and Peggy Orenstein, focus on girls, they capture the prevailing expert wisdom about self-esteem, whose sorry consequences can be seen in the boorish attitudes of both sexes. According to such experts, the biggest problem tween girls face is not a loss of adult guidance but the opposite. Parents and teachers are guilty of "silencing" girls around this age, goes the argument, and the result is a loss of self-confidence. Instead of submitting children to what Gilligan calls "the tyranny of the nice and the kind," adults should instead focus their parenting energies on supporting and modeling assertive behavior.

And Gilligan and her followers do mean assertive. The new model for girls is the sort of macho, braggart boy that in more levelheaded times made parents hide their daughters. In her study of several California middle schools, Orenstein is impressed by the self-confidence of the boys she observes who call out in class and shout one another down when they have an answer. "[W]hen the girls in [the] class do speak," she writes sadly, "they follow the rules."

Not only did these writers fail to think through what happens when adults believe that children are better off ignoring rules of behavior, but also they neglected to ask about the ultimate purpose of the power they proposed to hand over to children. Confidence, sure—but confidence in the service of what goal? Self-assertion toward what end? Kids certainly couldn't be expected to know the answer. There is nothing in the creed of self-esteem that encourages adults to help mold children's judgment about what matters in life. In fact, quite the opposite. Empowerment implies that children should determine their own style, codes of behavior, and values without serious interference from parents. And they have.

Though the experts missed it entirely, producers of popular culture have been quick to grasp the empty heart of child empowerment, just as they understood the related consequences of parental absence. They saw that children's will to power and immature longings were easy to exploit. Ad writers for Bonne Bell cosmetics, for instance, marry the approved language of self-esteem and the child's natural desire to seem grown-up and hip in the eyes of her peers. "We know how to be cool," goes the text accompanying pictures of a new product called Lip Lix. "We have our own ideas. And make our own decisions. Watch out for us. We are girls."

The Spice Girls, the wildly popular British rock singers who sport slip dresses, hot pants, belly shirts, and oily globs of lipstick and mascara, invented the term "girl power" precisely to evoke the empty formula of self-esteem, whose ingredients are nothing more than self-assertion and face paint—or nothing more than "strength, courage, and a Wonderbra," as one Spice Girl motto puts it. "I'll tell you what I want, what I really, really want," they sing in the tune familiar now to girls five years and older worldwide, girls who at concerts flash the Winston Churchill V-sign and clench their fists in a power salute. And what is it? Caught up in the belief that power was in and of itself a satisfactory guiding virtue, self-esteem theorists failed to consider that what girls might really, really want is to dress up like female impersonators.

They also failed to grasp that empowerment is finally a greedy principle. When tweens talk about girl power on Websites and in interviews, they

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

make it clear that pure, undiluted self-esteem tends to ride roughshod over values smelling of self-restraint. "It's about not letting anyone judge you." "It's about no limitations," they write. *YM* magazine for teens has run a section called "Girl Zone: Your Guide to Kicking Butt."

Teachers confirm that, as far as kids are concerned, empowerment amounts to an in-your-face attitude. "If you tell them, 'You have to do your homework, or you won't graduate,'" says a counselor in a Queens middle school, "they look at you and say, 'So?'" A fifth-grade teacher at a tony East Side private girls' school says, "There's a lot of calling out. You try to get them to raise their hands, to wait their turn. They're very impatient and demanding. They challenge every point on the test. They insist on attention immediately." In Hollywood it is said that tweens roar with pleasure when the *Titanic* character played by Kate Winslet tells her mother to shut up and punctuates her order with an obscene gesture.

There is nothing in the creed of self-esteem that encourages adults to help mold children's judgment about what matters in life.

Of course, girls are not the only beneficiaries of the ideology of child empowerment. Boys also are enjoying the reign of "no limitations." Faced with students who have been taught the lessons of their own empowerment and who have no experience of authoritative, limit-setting adults at home, educators find themselves coping with a growing indifference toward authority. It's a situation the schools have trouble handling. When they want to discipline boys who are caught writing obscenities in a girl's yearbook, or stuffing a backpack down the toilet, or throwing a stink bomb in the school auditorium—to cite a few of the examples I heard—school officials are not likely to receive any support from the parent. Seeing their job as being their child's advocate in the narrowest, legalistic sense, parents of the culprits in these instances cajoled, manipulated, and argued against any attempt by the school to have their sons face the music.

It is likely that girls' traditional role as goody-goodies used to act as a brake on boys' natural tendency toward restlessness and machismo. Now, as girls are "empowered" to become as bad as they wanna be, boys are "empowered" to become even badder. "Sixth-graders used to be benign and afraid of adults," Bedford, New York, principal Jim Alloy told me. "Now you see some of them who are so defiant, their parents have no idea what to do with them. I have several students from affluent homes with PINS petitions against them." (PINS, which stands for Person in Need of Supervision, allows local authorities to intercede with out-of-control kids.) Whether boy or girl, empowered children, it seems, find support for—or at least, indifference toward—their worst impulses.

Thus tweens, far from being simply a marketing niche group, speak to the very essence of our future. They are the vanguard of a new, deculturated generation, isolated from family and neighborhood, shrugged at by parents, dominated by peers, and delivered into the hands of a sexualized and status- and fad-crazed marketplace.

A second-grade teacher told me that, at her school's yearly dance festival, she is finding it increasingly difficult to interest her seven-year-olds in traditional kid stuff like the Mexican hat dance or the hokey-pokey. They want to dress up like the Spice Girls and shimmy away. Look for the tweening of America to continue its downward march. •

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Public Health Quackery

Heather Mac Donald

Public health professors now teach that social injustice, rather than individual behavior, is the true cause of disease—a sure prescription for a less healthy future.

From the time of the Roman Empire until well after the discovery of the tuberculosis bacterium in 1882, many of the best medical minds believed that "miasmas"—invisible vapors emitted from the earth—caused killer infections such as typhus, diphtheria, and malaria. Though the bacteriological revolution of the late nineteenth century routed that theory, a new miasma theory has lately sprung up in schools of public health, holding that racism and sexism, though as unmeasurable as the ancient miasmas, cause AIDS, cancer, drug addiction, and heart disease. Indeed, according to public health professors, living in America is acutely hazardous to women and minorities, so shot through is the United States with sickness-producing—even fatal—injustice and bigotry.

You might be inclined to dismiss such a claim as just one more silly but harmless emanation from the ever more loony academy. Trouble is, government health agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) take the academic miasmaticians very seriously, funding their activities and busily investigating on their own the health effects of "patriarchy" and racism. Though such politicized inquiries divert money from needed health education and research, their most pernicious effect is on the concept of individual responsibility, once a cornerstone of public health efforts. Government and academic miasmaticians now argue that members of designated victim groups are incapable of controlling such destructive behavior as promiscuous unprotected sex and intravenous drug use. In other words, some of the very people who claim to be solving public health problems have embraced an ideology that can only make them worse.

The command center of the modern miasma movement is at the Harvard School of Public Health, with Associate Professor Nancy Krieger at the helm. Shown on her Web page sporting a tie and vest (a preemptive strike, no doubt, against the patriarchy), Krieger is a magnet for government money, which underwrites a flood of her articles on racism, sexism, and health. In 1996, major national newspapers reported Krieger's research, funded by the

Unwilling to counsel individual restraint to prevent disease . . .

JANE ROSETT/SYGMA

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, claiming that racism causes hypertension in blacks. Never mind that her data showed no correlation between bias and blood pressure: working-class blacks who reported no biased treatment had the highest blood pressure, for example, while those who did report discrimination had the lowest. These results simply prove the existence of "internalized oppression," according to this master miasmatician. Blacks who say they are not discriminated against are in fact the most victimized of all, because they have been brainwashed into denying their oppression.

Behind all their talk of racism and sexism, Krieger and her colleagues' real prey is individual responsibility. Traditional epidemiology looks at both individual risk behaviors and the environment to determine the source and pattern of disease. But the modern miasmaticians assert that to study individual risk behaviors, such as drug use or smoking, "blames the victim"—at least when that victim is poor, female, or black. When such victims get sick, society is to blame. And so the public health revisionists are generating a remarkable body of excuses for the most avoidable and dangerous behaviors, particularly those relating to HIV/AIDS.

Typical is an article by Nancy Krieger and Sally Zierler, another prolific radical teaching at Brown's School of Public Health. Writing in the 1997 *Annual Review of Public Health*, the authors argue that "enormous public force," rather than their own bad decisions, causes minority women to get HIV. To Krieger and Zierler, HIV is like an airborne disease; if you're a woman living in a certain neighborhood, you have little choice but to become infected.

The first element of "public force" that makes women get HIV, according to Krieger and Zierler, is . . . Ronald Reagan. Reagan's military buildup and tax cuts for the rich created the conditions for the spread of HIV; the racism of "white Europeans" fanned the epidemic, for racism makes women use drugs, a high-risk behavior for HIV. "In response to daily assaults of racial prejudice and the denial of dignity," they write, "women may turn to readily available mind-altering substances for relief." Racism also causes promiscuous unprotected sex. "Seeking sanctuary from racial hatred through sexual connection as a way to enhance self-esteem . . . may offer rewards so compelling that condom use becomes less of a priority," the authors explain.

Since individual women have no control over whether they get HIV, public health officials should not seek individual behavior change. Rather, the authors demand that government assist in racial and gender "empowerment," by—among other odd new public health strategies—increasing racial pride and awareness of ancestry among blacks, monitoring the race of elected officials, and examining "sexual fulfillment" and "sexual identity" among women.

The facts on which the miasmatics base their belief system can be remarkably flimsy. Take for instance the assertion of Margaret Ensminger, a professor of health policy and management at the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health, that there is "not a lot of evidence to support the idea that if poor people changed their behavior, their health would get better." Her evidence to the contrary includes the *Upstairs, Downstairs* television series, in which the wealthy flee the plague, and the death rate on the *Titanic*—2 percent of first-class female passengers and 44 percent of lower-class women, she alleges. Even if such "evidence" were not partly fictional, it is irrelevant to the question of whether the behavior of today's poor helps cause their health problems.

Other academic miasmaticians try to generate more conventional proof that the American economic and social system makes people lethally sick. A study in the June *Journal of the American Medical Association* is typical. A group of public health and sociology professors at the University of Michigan, with funding from the National Institute on Aging, looked at whether smoking, drinking, sedentariness, and obesity explained the earlier mortality among the poorer and less well educated compared with the better-off. Having found that these four behaviors do not explain *all* the difference, the researchers seize gleefully on their desired results: "heightened levels of anger

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and hostility" resulting from economic inequality, along with the "stress of racism, classism, and other phenomena related to the social distribution of power and resources," are killing people. Hence, public health officials should focus not on individual risk behaviors to improve health but rather on the far more important health effects of "socioeconomic stratification." As in much miasmatic research, the leap from data to conclusion is premature. The Michigan researchers leave unexamined a host of relevant risk factors, including drug use, sharing unclean needles, promiscuity, violence, diet, taking medication reliably, seeking medical care when needed, and genetic predisposition to disease.

In fact, the evidence for the paramount role of individual behavior in health is overwhelming. A CDC study from 1977, before the onset of modern miasmatism, estimated that "lifestyle" plays more than twice the role in premature death than does environment—50 percent of premature deaths result from behavior, compared with 20 percent from genes, 20 percent from environment, and 10 percent from inadequacies in health care. More recently, former secretary of Health and Human Services Louis Sullivan estimated that improving health behaviors around just the top ten causes of death could cut premature deaths among blacks by 40 percent to 70 percent.

Even the miasmatics' own research clearly demonstrates the relevance of behavior to health. Take a study by Brown's Sally Zierler comparing the risk factors for rape with those for HIV in women, a study funded by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease. Zierler's goal is explicit: she seeks to "shift the burden of responsibility [for avoiding HIV], and thereby public health policy, from women as individuals to their broader social context."

Yet Zierler's data demonstrate a strong correlation between behavior and risk. Women with HIV were more likely to report adult rape if they had had sex before the age of 15 rather than waiting until at least age 18, if they had an average of three or more partners per year, or if they were bisexual. Clearly, the greater the promiscuity, the greater the chance of rape, a conclusion borne out by another of Zierler's data: rape is five times more likely among adult women with HIV who reported a previous sexually transmitted disease. Sexual history, in other words, *does* matter on the question of rape, especially since most rapists know their victims. Alcohol and drugs matter, too. The study showed that using them increased the chance of rape, and women with HIV who first injected drugs before the age of 16 were 11 times more likely to report rape than were women with HIV who never injected drugs.

Of course, Zierler would not accept her data's inescapable message that behavioral choices count, because, to her, shooting drugs and engaging in promiscuous sex are not choices but unavoidable responses to poverty and racism. Her conclusion? Men are to blame for HIV: "Studies are needed that investigate the role of men as sexual partners," she decides, "and more generally, as people who shape the conditions and impose the experiences that increase women's exposure and susceptibility to HIV and its morbidity."

The first element of "public force" that makes women get HIV, according to Krieger and Zierler, is . . . Ronald Reagan.

Even though the miasmatic dismissal of behavior's role in health rests on a purely ideological, rather than scientific, basis, the academic miasmaticians have easily convinced government health officials that individual responsibility is a sham. In a recent article on AIDS in the British journal *Social Science and Medicine*, Carolyn Beeker, a research sociologist at the CDC, argues that "virtually no behavior is under the complete and voluntary control of individuals."

At a philosophical level, Beeker may well be right. But she is not referring to the conditions for free will but to such mundane issues as "talking to a partner

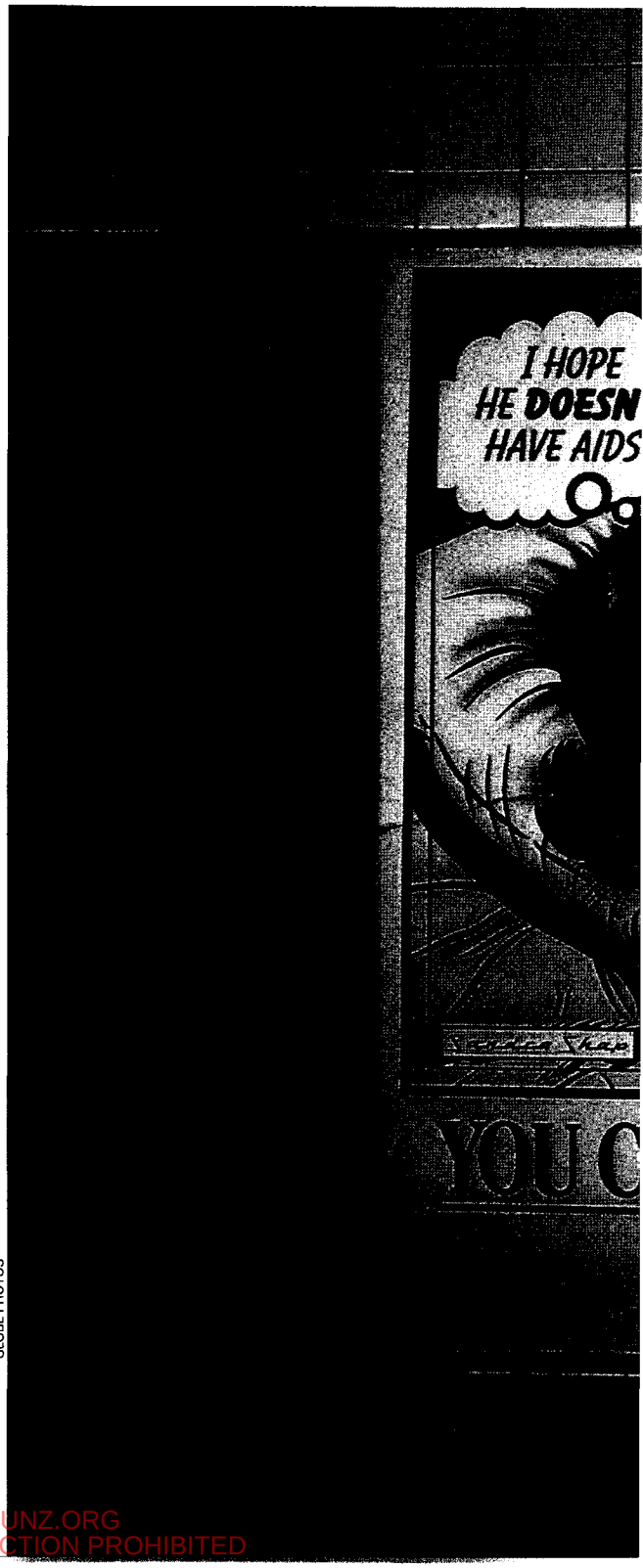
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

about condoms, avoiding anal intercourse, or leaving a sexually abusive situation." These behaviors, Beeker asserts, are not "isolated voluntary acts, but part of socially conditioned, culturally embedded, economically constrained patterns of living."

This doctrine is particularly pernicious regarding AIDS. In all but a few tragic cases, HIV is communicated by very specific individual behavior—frequent unprotected intercourse with infected partners, anal intercourse, shooting drugs with infected needles. It lies within an individual's power to avoid the disease, and public health efforts should focus on changing behavior, on the one hand, and on protecting the public through testing and partner notification, on the other—traditional public health measures that have been all but discarded for AIDS.

But Beeker and many of her colleagues at the CDC have no such tried-and-true responses in mind. The solution to AIDS, they say, lies not in behavior change but in nothing less than a revolution in male-female relations. The CDC has targeted for eradication "gender roles which define women as subordinate to men." Beeker also decries "women's dependence on their partners for sexual satisfaction." No wonder the public health profession was sad to see Jocelyn Elders, President Clinton's onanism-promoting surgeon general, booted from the job.

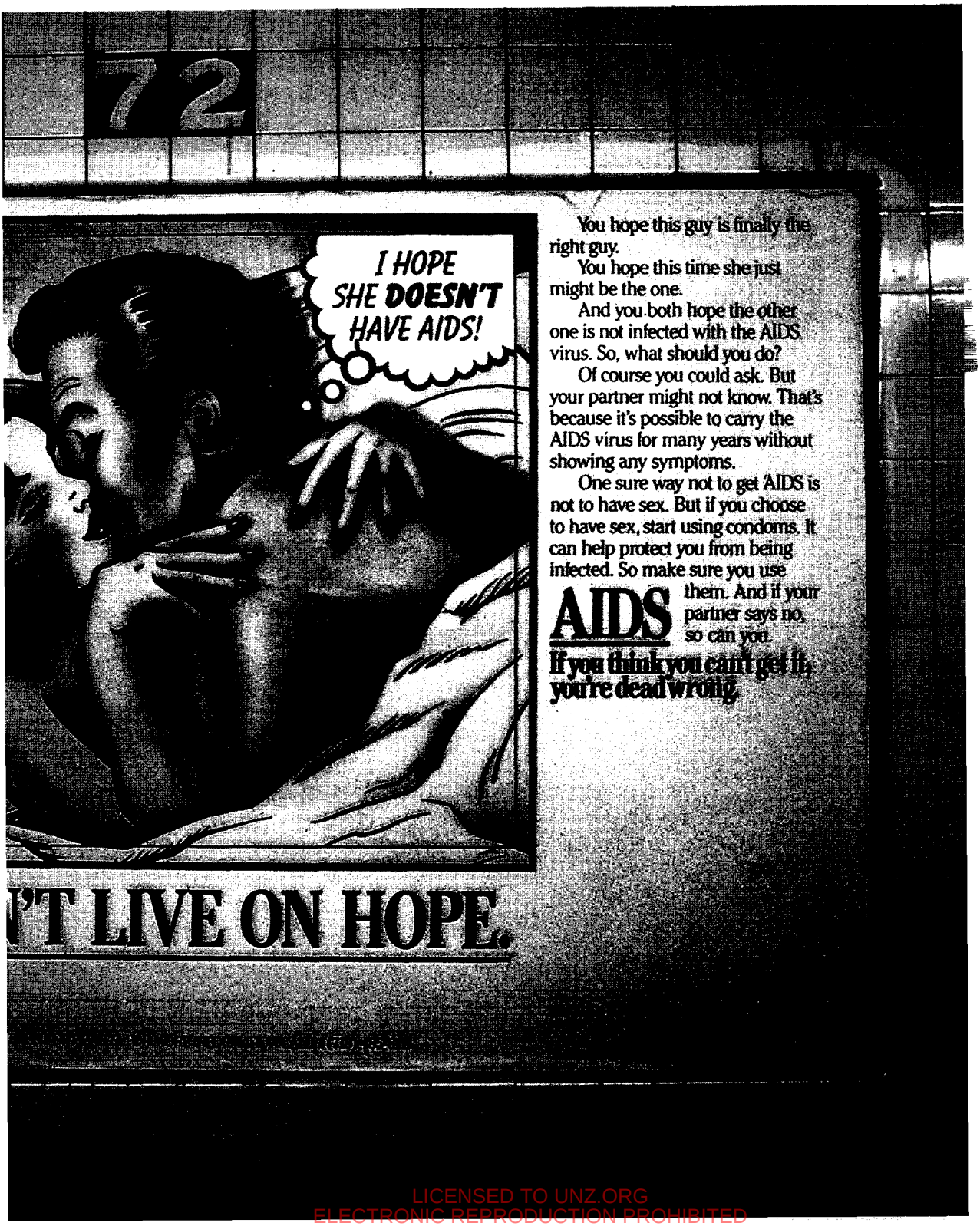
In this climate, it's not surprising that many government HIV "interventions" look more like women's studies consciousness-raising sessions than anything the founders of public health would recognize. The CDC, drawing on its annual $2.5 billion stream of tax dollars, funded an "intervention" for young pregnant poor women to promote their sense of "communal mindedness" and "enhance their negotiating skills." Beeker admits that it was "not clear" whether the participants' "communal competence" actually increased—nor, according to Beeker, does any evidence exist that "community empowerment" reduces risk better than a behavioral approach. Still, "empowerment" models continue to flourish.



GLOBE PHOTOS

. . . public health professors instead advocate making risky behavior "safer". . .

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED


72
I HOPE SHE DOESN'T HAVE AIDS!
You hope this guy is finally the right guy.
You hope this time she just might be the one.
And you both hope the other one is not infected with the AIDS virus. So, what should you do?
Of course you could ask. But your partner might not know. That's because it's possible to carry the AIDS virus for many years without showing any symptoms.
One sure way not to get AIDS is not to have sex. But if you choose to have sex, start using condoms. It can help protect you from being infected. So make sure you use them. And if your partner says no, so can you.
AIDS
If you think you can't get it, you're dead wrong.
T LIVE ON HOPE.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The government has snatched up leading academic miasmaticians for research on racism and health. The CDC and the National Center for Health Statistics, for example, have given Harvard's Nancy Krieger $92,392 for an ongoing study of the social determinants of cancer for four different racial and ethnic groups. The National Institute for Child Health and Human Development is about to fund her study on how to include socioeconomic data in routine health statistics. Krieger, who often seems like the government's official voice of miasmatism, wrote up a 1994 National Institutes of Health conference called "Measuring Social Inequalities in Health" for the leading federal public health journal, *Public Health Reports*. Hitting all the major miasmatic themes, her article reported that the conference recommended collecting socioeconomic data as part of routine health reporting, so as to show "how the economic structure of the United States, and not simply individual behaviors or 'lifestyles,' " underlies racial and ethnic differences in health. But not just any socioeconomic data would do. "Most measures of socioeconomic position have been based upon the model of the white European heterosexual nuclear family," Krieger complained. Since such measures ignore "nontraditional (such as lesbian and gay) households," they are patently inadequate.

Such contemporary public health initiatives as needle exchanges for drug users, condom distribution in schools, and the war on Big Tobacco embody the miasmatic assumption that individuals, especially from designated victim groups, have no control over their self-destructive actions. The American Public Health Association, the largest such group in the world, has lobbied Washington for federal funding of needle exchanges; President Clinton's Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS, a miasmatic hotbed, huffily condemned the administration's recent reluctant decision to stay out of the needle business. The administration's silence, the council said, was "particularly shameful" in light of the health disparities among racial groups. In other words, went the implication, blacks can't be expected to refrain from drug use and so should instead be helped to use drugs "safely"—a remarkable perversion not only of public health traditions but of much else.

Even without federal funding, needle exchange thrives in cities across the country. Along with needles, Bridgeport, Connecticut, also passes out leaflets helpfully advising drug users how to smoke crack correctly and suggesting a temporary "slowdown" if the user starts coughing up "dark stuff." Of course, officially sanctioned free needles often end up back in circulation on the streets, when users sell them for more drug money, according to Rodney Hopson, a federally funded health researcher at Duquesne University.

The public health profession's mania for showering condoms upon Americans, from schoolchildren on up, reflects the same rejection of individual self-control. A 1995 editorial in the *American Journal of Public Health* called "our society's failure" to place condom vending machines in convenience stores and public bathrooms and our failure to encourage "aggressive marketing of condoms" a "national tragedy." As emeritus professor Monroe Lerner of the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health argues, the federal public health bureaucracy now assumes that people have "no impulse control, no sense of personal responsibility." It expects young people in particular, he says, to engage in "promiscuous sexual relations." As for the schools of public health, "don't expect any plea from them to observe a more traditional morality, where young people don't go to bed with each other before they are married." Lerner, who helped push the field into more political arenas during the 1960s, a development he now regrets, acerbically summarizes the past three decades of public health thinking: "The words *sin* and *deviance* have vanished from the vocabulary."

From its inception, of course, public health has had a special concern for improving the health of the poor. But the miasmatic exemption of the poor from individual responsibility is a dangerous new twist. "There's new elements in the discourse," enthuses CDC community psychologist May Kennedy. "The commitment to social justice at the CDC is just now becoming explicit." Expressing the same view is Paul Geltman, a professor of pediatrics at Boston Medical Center and an advisor to the Massachusetts Department of Health. "[There's]

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

absolutely been an increase in political consciousness in public health in recent years," he says.

Why? One reason is the ever larger number of sociologists, community psychologists, and anthropologists now in the field. Lacking medical or scientific training, they see public health as a vehicle for social change. "Those of us who were activists in the 1960s are now professors," Brown's Sally Zierler, herself a doctor of public health, explained in an interview. "This is a way of continuing the work." Zierler and her radical colleagues use their academic credentials to "authorize" themselves, she says: now "we are working from the inside." Zierler marvels over her group's ascension: "In the 1950s we would have been blacklisted," she says. "We couldn't have had the agenda we have and be hired."

But an equally important reason for the rise of the miasmaticians is the dominance of identity politics in every other area of public discourse. In declaring that racism and sexism determine the very fundamentals of life for women and minorities, the miasmatics parrot their colleagues in the rest of the academy. It was just a matter of time before public health picked up the jargon and conclusions of multiculturalism.

Not that the miasmatics have completely swept the field. At the opposite end of the public health spectrum are the genetic researchers, with their ever more impressive breakthroughs in finding the genetic and molecular determinants of disease. The geneticists are anathema to the miasmatics, because finding genetic correlates for disease obviates the need for the gender and race revolution. Midway between the geneticists and the miasmatics is "risk factor epidemiology," which studies the relation of both individual behavior and environmental factors to disease. Though far less precise in its causal conclusions than genetic epidemiology, risk factor "epi" is nevertheless a model of scientific rigor compared with the miasmatics.

Few traditional epidemiologists will publicly challenge the race-and-gender crowd. Even so, it is not hard to detect a certain chip on the miasmatic shoulder. "The gatekeepers of epidemiology," Zierler says scornfully, "are white male M.D.s"—three of the most damning words in a miasmatician's vocabulary. The miasmaticians claim, quite falsely, that all the power and funding lie with high-tech genetic epi. "One of the issues in this environment," explains Denise Herd, a professor of Multicultural Health at Berkeley's School of Public Health, "is that medicine is the elite field. Sometimes you get socially conscious doctors, but if not, biological science is perceived as more relevant to public health than social science."

Nothing could be more odious to a miasmatician than a preference for hard science. To them, "biomedical" is a term of derision, for it implies a focus on an individual human being (rather than on power relations in society) by a detached observer with implicitly superior knowledge. This is far too individualistic, Western, and male a concept for the miasmaticians. Science's status, according to Harvard's Nancy Krieger, grows out of cold war paranoia and McCarthyism rather than out of its breathtaking intellectual insights. The CDC's Carolyn Beeker recommends as an antidote to this repressive scientism that the researcher act as "advocate, collaborator, or mentor"—in other words, as political activist.

"Those of us who were activists in the 1960s are now professors. This is a way of continuing the work."

Nothing better demonstrates the miasmatics' contempt for traditional science than the citations in their published research. A partial citation list for an article in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* by Nancy Krieger and Diane Rowley, an assistant director for science at the CDC, includes (among more traditional material): strident feminist bell hooks [*sic*] ("Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism"); equally strident and unscholarly literary theorist Michelle Wallace ("Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman"); novelist and race critic Toni Morrison; lesbian poet

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Adrienne Rich; radical feminist commentator Barbara Ehrenreich; and *The New Our Bodies, Ourselves: A Book By and For Women*, by the Boston Women's Health Book Collective. What scientific evidence do Krieger and Rowley submit for the completely unempirical charge of widespread "racism in medical school"? A "personal communication": perhaps, in other words, a whine from a friend. Equally revealing is what counts as noncontroversial fact, needing no footnote: Krieger and Rowley state that in the U.S., "women are routinely treated as sex objects and face the daily harassment of street remarks." How do they know?

This cavalier approach to fact pervades all miasmatic research on racism and sexism. The CDC has so far spent roughly $3 million conducting a three-city "ethnographic" (i.e., nonscientific) study of black women's experiences with racism and sexism. The study uses the Krieger fail-safe method for finding racism: if a black woman says she has been discriminated against, she has. If she says she has not, she *really* has, because that means she has low levels of racial pride, a sure sign of discrimination.

What about misperception problems? I asked Diane Rowley. What if that allegedly racist bank teller or welfare worker treats everyone brusquely, or what if the allegedly brusque behavior is simply businesslike? No problem—the CDC falls back on folk wisdom. "There's a saying," Rowley explains: "Black people are paranoid, but in most cases it is justifiable paranoia."

The miasmaticians' blame-the-male research manifests equal indifference to fact. Hortensia Amaro of Boston University's School of Public Health used a National Institute on Drug Abuse grant to show that men are to blame for involving women in drugs. She interviewed 35 drug users, but her resulting psychohistories hardly support the image of the helpless or put-upon female.

For example, Lisa, a 20-year-old mother of two, says: "Well, getting high, I've always kept a drug

ARCHIVE PHOTOS

. . . —a far cry from the heroic public health measures of the past, as illustrated by the nineteenth-century campaign to vaccinate the poor.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNL GRS
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dealer next to me. I mean, I got my kids' father, who I love, but he won't give me drugs. And I love my drugs, too. And drugs just means a little bit more to me than he did." A mother of three with a $100-a-day heroin and cocaine habit used to get money from her U.S. veteran partner. "But I was still hustling, you know, lying, stealing, and cheating, and prostituting with him, but he didn't know it. . . . I got to the point where not only I was stealing out of the store, I was robbing people, um, I was prostituting. You know, I was doing things I said I would never do." Other women admit to staying with men they don't like just to get drugs. One woman introduces her mother, a former heroin user, to cocaine; others start using drugs not with men but with their girlfriends.

Such morally equivocal stories do nothing to shake Amaro off the trail. She concludes bathetically: "Men who go to jail [as had 49 percent of the women in her study], men who do not take care of them or their children, and men who disappoint them fill the lives of these women." Therefore, gender relations need to change before women can be expected to avoid drug use. But of course, these women should have disappointed themselves by their reckless behavior toward their children. To blame men for their predicament is a moral dodge.

What does the government intend to do with all the treatises on sexism, racism, and health it keeps subsidizing or authoring? Its intentions are unclear. But those of academic miasmaticians are more definite. "I want . . . people [to] understand that they're complicit in oppression," Brown's Sally Zierler announces. Zierler wants everyone to acknowledge his role in making poor people get HIV and use drugs: "It can be transformative to realize your complicity," she says: ideally, you go through a "hierarchy" from "guilt to anger to real commitment." And then, with a whole cadre of people who understand that individual responsibility is an oppressive concept, who knows what major societal changes will be possible?

All this is a far cry from the public health profession's distinguished past, with its multiplicity of practical improvements to the quality of ordinary life. As new populations flooded into the cities in both Europe and America in the nineteenth century, urban aristocrats and plutocrats looked around and said, "The poor are living in wretched and often lethal conditions; we have a responsibility to improve those conditions." The middle- and upper-class movements for sanitary and housing reform—creating air shafts in crowded tenements and closed drainage systems in the streets—and for unadulterated milk and clean water represented the first great wave of Victorian reform and a monumental advance in social consciousness. In subsequent decades, public health pioneers would zealously sleuth out the source of infectious disease in swamps and slums, often falling ill themselves, while spreading the gospel of cleanliness.

The early sanitary reformers on both sides of the Atlantic recognized that new sewage and drainage systems, though essential to removing the lethal "miasmas," could not alone solve sickness and early death in the slums. The habits of the poor needed changing, too. John Simon, London's first medical health officer, expressed sentiments typical of the time in his 1848 First Annual Report: "Among the influences prejudicial to health in the City of London, as elsewhere, must be reckoned the social condition of the lower classes," he wrote. "The filthy, or slovenly, or improvident, or destructive or intemperate, or dishonest habits of these classes, are cited as an explanation of the inefficiency of measures designed for their advantage. . . . It is too true that, among these classes, there are swarms of men and women who have yet to learn that human beings should dwell differently from cattle; swarms, to whom personal cleanliness is utterly unknown." While the city fathers must improve public sanitation and the like, he concluded, no real improvement in the health of the slums is possible without "improving the social condition of the poor."

That meant not just economic improvement but, equally important, a change in behavior. In France, René Louis Villerme, a member of the hygiene department for the French Royal Academy of Medicine, similarly called in 1821 for moral regeneration, not the redistribution of wealth, as a key to improving the health of the poor. In the same vein, American statistician Lemuel Shattuck argued in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his 1850 *Report of the Sanitary Commission of Massachusetts* that drunkenness and sloth among the poor were destroying their health. Since such lack of personal responsibility puts everyone at risk, he concluded, it was as much the state's duty to raise the moral level of the poor as to build the infrastructure for civic cleanliness.

The science and technology of public health grew far more sophisticated in the late nineteeth century, but the moral tone of the field persisted. An 1883 article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* declared: "Public health . . . is the companion of orderly habits and pure morals." No one doubted the individual's responsibility to practice elementary sanitation, for many of the most important public health reforms continued to be low-tech behavioral change. Early in the twentieth century, the Public Health Service eliminated typhoid in the rural South with its clean privy campaign, cut death rates from infectious diseases by advocating trash can lids to keep out flies, and ended trachoma, a highly contagious, blinding eye infection, in Appalachia by the advocacy of soap and water and separate towels for different family members.

Many public health pioneers had a fervent commitment to improving social welfare. But they would have found it inconceivable to argue that seeking individual behavior change is against the interest of the poor or nonwhite. Too much evidence existed of the importance of personal habits to health, and the field has usually respected evidence.

So the pioneers would be especially horrified by the modern miasmatic policy toward sexually transmitted diseases, which, unlike the epidemic diseases of the past, still plague an astoundingly high number of Americans. Two principles—the protection of the public and the advocacy of individual restraint—governed public policy regarding venereal diseases for most of this century, up until the advent of AIDS. During World War I, for example—when venereal disease constituted such a military disaster that, given the option of eliminating all wounds or eliminating VD, every army commander would choose to wipe out VD, according to then-Surgeon General W. C. Gorgas—the only real hope was changing individual behavior. As Gorgas concluded: "It is the individual action and the individual beliefs of our people affected that are finally going to control the disease." Hence, he advised, the sexual morals of the male population must be elevated to the same plane as that of the female population.

In addition, the army tried hard to protect the public by monitoring behavior. It tested extensively, it searched out and treated all the sexual contacts of the infected patient, and it isolated the patient for treatment, methods that for decades were considered the best public health practice.

Villerme called in 1821 for moral regeneration, not the redistribution of wealth, as a key to improving the health of the poor.

The government-sponsored All-America Conference on Venereal Diseases in 1921 similarly exemplifies the traditional public health world view. The conferees rejected the contention of the Freudian psychological section that, because "disastrous consequences [follow from] repression of the sex instinct," the conference should avoid recommending continence as a disease-preventing measure. The conference committee, while noting "the complexity of the question of the relation of continence to the total well-being of the individual," nevertheless resolved that "the dangers and disadvantages to the individual and the race which ensue upon the infringement of continence in the unmarried man or woman are so serious that they outweigh the possible physiologic disadvantages of sexual abstinence." After all, the conferees agreed, "the prevention of contact between infected and uninfected individuals is the first principle of prophylaxis" (i.e., prevention).

However obvious this "first principle" may seem, the prevention of sexual contact between infected and uninfected individuals plays no part in today's AIDS prevention efforts. Public health authorities have never dared suggest that infected

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

people should refrain from intercourse with the uninfected, or that the infected should exercise sexual restraint. Equally outside the realm of today's public health discourse is the All-America Conference's view that if an infected person is likely to continue spreading the disease, the doctor's duty of confidentiality is over. At that point, resolved the conference, the doctor must "exercise whatever means are at his command" to protect the public health—presumably, quarantine (a traditional, if extreme, public health measure) or publicizing the patient's infected status.

But today, at least 40 percent of persons infected with HIV do not tell their sex partners of their status, and nearly two-thirds of those do not regularly use condoms—suggesting that the government's laid-back prevention philosophy is not working. Yet until recently, public health authorities placed patient confidentiality far above their duty to protect the good of all. Caving in to gay activists, they abandoned the elementary practice of reporting the names of the infected to a central registry; and they have never emphasized the individual's obligation of disclosure. The CDC stopped testing newborns for HIV several years ago, when threatened with legislation that would require it to notify mothers if their babies tested positive. The CDC put the mother's rights of confidentiality above the innocent baby's need for immediate treatment, a reversal of public health traditions. Only a political backlash against "AIDS exceptionalism" —the exempting of AIDS from conventional public health measures—has begun to return some common sense to AIDS policy through legislation.

As a result of aggressive public health sleuthing and the social stigma against promiscuity, VD was way down by the late 1940s. But starting in 1957, on the eve of the sexual revolution, it began to rise. Today, the U.S. leads the industrialized world in sexually transmitted diseases, with 10 million to 12 million new cases a year. And the response of the public health community is, in essence, Way to go! Asked whether we should recommend abstinence to prevent AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, Boston University's Hortensia Amaro says: "No, that would be to shut down the voice, the internal voice of sexuality." That Amaro advises the Massachusetts Department of Health on HIV prevention does not give one hope for ending the problem anytime soon in that state.

Like Amaro, the CDC and indeed the entire public health profession are big believers in the "internal voice of sexuality." A CDC poster at the 12th World AIDS Conference in Geneva this July announced incredulously that "only" 56 percent of teens interviewed in a phone survey in three American cities said they had a condom with them at the time of the interview, and only 32 percent reportedly took a condom with them the last time they left the house. And at last year's annual American Public Health Association conference, a researcher from the Medical College of Ohio in Toledo reported her surprise when, in a survey of college freshmen at an unnamed southeastern state university, "only" 61 percent of respondents reported having had "voluntary intercourse." Struggling for an explanation, she hypothesized that they must have come from a "fundamentalist background."

In perhaps the most momentous reversal of historic public health practice, some modern miasmaticians view traditional morality as the very cause of sexually transmitted disease. In a remarkable article in the June *American Journal of Public Health*, a group of sociologists at the University of Chicago blame Americans' disapproval of premarital, extramarital, and homosexual sex for our high sexually transmitted disease rate. Such regressive attitudes impede effective public health campaigns, the authors claim.

Schools of public health are doing all they can to combat such dangerous sexual morality. For example, the public health department in New York University's school of education offers a whole course on "Alternative Lifestyles." The aim of the course is to question the "personal feelings" individuals may have toward non-traditional families and "intimate living relationships." Just to make sure students understand the backwardness of the heterosexual family, the department provides a cradle-to-grave curriculum on homosexuality, from "Gay and Lesbian People:

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Adolescents" to "Gay and Lesbian People: Aging." The agenda of these courses is politics, pure and simple, focusing on how "professionals may assist gay and lesbian people in affirming their identities, securing their rights, and coping with stress." Will anyone discuss the health risks of the promiscuous homosexual "lifestyle"? Unlikely.

The government's health agencies are also doing their best to counter regressive old-fashioned attitudes. The National Institutes of Health have a whole set of guidelines on the recruitment of lesbians as subjects for clinical research, part of a spurious and wastefully expensive congressional mandate to ensure gender and race "diversity" in clinical trials. The lesbian guidelines, like the race and gender quotas, turn out to be nothing more than a Full Employment for Lesbians Act. According to the NIH, researchers must "reassure" prospective lesbian trial participants "that lesbians have been involved in the writing of the project and analysis of data." Researchers should also "include 'out' lesbians in all staff and research levels and establish a local lesbian advisory committee for further advice."

Given these views, it's no surprise that the federal public health bureaucracy's prevention strategies for HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases are so muddy, involving "skill-based training that increases, through modeling and practice, decision-making and communication skills that support reduction of sexual risk behaviors," as the CDC puts it. In this characteristic verbiage, only one thing is clear: the CDC is not about to call for testing, monitoring, partner notification, or, heaven forbid, abstinence. For the CDC, the teen "sexual partner" is a given; the only negotiable part is the amount of "communication" one has with that "partner."

The CDC has spent approximately $12 million on a five-year, five-city teen sexually transmitted disease prevention project, featuring condom demonstrations on dildos in a church in Nashville and condom ads on buses and billboards. A layman might assume that the CDC would measure the success of the program by changes in the sexual disease or pregnancy rates. But no: instead, the agency measures self-reported "risk-reduction" behavior. Yet surely, the bottom line for $12 million in tax dollars ought to be actual disease and pregnancy reduction, not merely whether condom use increased.

What really excites public health professionals today is not reducing teen pregnancy, and certainly not reducing teen sex, but "empowering" girls. I asked Andrea Solarz, a community psychologist at the Institute of Medicine, a division of the National Academy of Sciences, about the institute's teen pregnancy prevention approach.

Some modern miasmaticians view traditional morality as the very cause of sexually transmitted disease.

"It's not 'Just say no,' " she replied. "We're more likely to do an intervention that empowers teens to negotiate the process of decision, that empowers girls to make the choices they want to make." If that means intercourse, fine.

The fatuousness of the miasmatics should not obscure the continued importance of public health, from the unsung labors of municipal health departments in testing water supplies and monitoring infectious diseases to the fight against terrifying new antibiotic-resistant bacteria in hospitals. Even in such politically conquered institutions as the CDC and NIH, serious, vital science is still being done. But the field increasingly identifies itself by the most radical elements within it. The keynote speaker at the American Public Health Association's annual meeting this November will be Jesse Jackson; the association's miasmatic caucuses—from socialist to lesbian, gay, and bisexual—already plan a show of force. This self-indulgent pursuit of a gender and race revolution squanders the great legacy of public health, whose most enlightened practitioners sought to balance public and private responsibility for health. •

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Willie Brown Shows How Not to Run a City

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Brian C. Anderson and Matt Robinson

Two years ago, *Newsweek* ran a story on America's new urbanism, featuring Mayors Rudy Giuliani of New York and Willie Brown of San Francisco on its cover as exemplars of the innovative policies that are reviving the nation's cities. But *Newsweek* got it only half right: while Mayor Giuliani's bold, mold-breaking approach has slashed Gotham's crime rate, shrunk its welfare rolls, and civilized its public spaces, Mayor Brown has turned San Francisco into a museum of the discredited urban policies of the past. And with predictable results. San Francisco is overrun with homeless people, crimes go unpunished, the public schools fail, and the city's municipal budget rockets higher and higher. As an aide to California governor Pete Wilson put it, "San Francisco is the anti–New York." It is today's Exhibit A of how not to run a city.

In San Francisco, the countercultural ideas that ravaged America's cities—that one has a right to the state-subsidized "lifestyle" of one's choice, that the homeless are victims of a cruel economy, that crime is society's fault, that the purpose of education is to attack discrimination—still prevail, as if nothing has been learned about their destructive real-world effects. For a moment a few years ago, under then-mayor Frank Jordan, San Francisco seemed ready to liberate public space from the panhandlers and junkies who had made the city a crime-ridden dystopia by the end of the eighties. No more: under the flamboyant Brown, San Francisco's first black mayor, the city now stands with its back to the future, clinging to its old-paradigm past.

Brown himself, in his resplendent fedoras, $3,000 suits, and $500 Italian shoes, seems like a throwback to the past, a figure more like former Detroit mayor Coleman Young than like Rudy Giuliani. Born 64 years ago in segregated, depression-ridden East Texas, Brown grew up poor, shining shoes as a teenager. After earning a college diploma from San Francisco State University and a law degree from the University of California's Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco, Brown got swept up in the vortex of sixties' radicalism, angrily fighting for the rights of victims of America's racism, as

By jettisoning the new urban wisdom, Mayor Brown is making San Francisco uglier, more dangerous, and financially shaky.

CHRIS STEWART/SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

he saw it—who often enough were merely "hustlers and pimps," as *San Francisco Examiner* columnist Rob Morse observes.

But Brown's career as a lawyer was short-lived: he proved a born politician. Elected to the California Assembly in 1964 as a left-wing Democrat with the backing of the Marxist W. E. B. DuBois Club, a hothouse of sixties' radicalism, Brown spent the next 31 years in Sacramento, the last 15 as assembly speaker. Until term limits finally drove him out of the Legislature, Brown favored friends and crushed enemies like a modern-day Florentine, becoming one of California's most powerful politicians—ever—and one of the leading black political figures in the country. Though he had allies in the corporate world—including the tobacco companies, from which he's taken more money than Jesse Helms—Brown relentlessly defended liberal causes, from affirmative action to the expansion of the welfare state, throughout his legislative career.

Once home to flower children and free love, Haight Street now mocks the emancipatory ideals of the sixties.

When Brown ran for mayor of San Francisco three years ago, his formidable political skills were on ample display. He forged a sizable leftist voting base out of quarrelsome feminists, homosexual activists, homeless advocates, minorities, municipal unions, and social workers. Yet Brown probably wouldn't have won the election if not for the self-sabotage of his opponent, incumbent Frank Jordan, a former police chief who drew support from middle-class home owners on the city's western edge. The mayoral campaign ran tightly until Jordan, seeking to loosen up his straitlaced image, posed naked in his shower with two popular male talk-show hosts—also naked. Nobody took him seriously thereafter, and his campaign died from embarrassment.

Three years later, Brown holds on to his patched-together support, though his imperial manner continues to get him into trouble. Until voters rejected the idea in a June ballot, Brown wanted to evict 350 workers from City Hall to make room for an opulent ballroom and a kingly new protocol office, part of an ongoing renovation of the old building—"Taj Ma Willie," critics dub it—which will cost taxpayers upwards of $140 million. He'd like, too, to establish an official mayoral residence at Nimitz House, a beautiful Navy-owned mansion on Yerba Buena Island in San Francisco Bay.

Then there's the chunk of landfill and mud next to Yerba Buena Island: the mile-wide Treasure Island. Still owned by the Department of Defense, "Willigan's Island," as critics call it, features a striking vista of the city from San Francisco Bay, though it's off-limits to most San Franciscans. Last year, the city's Board of Supervisors gave Brown control of the nonprofit corporation that will buy Treasure Island from the Navy and supervise its development. Since then, Brown has used it as a private preserve, hosting lavish parties and offering development contracts to cronies. Last June, though, voters grew suspicious of the mayor's plans for the island and passed a non-binding measure that calls on the Board of Supervisors to dissolve the Brown-stacked nonprofit corporation and hand the island over to existing city agencies. The board has refused to do so. "Da Mayor," as he calls himself, rules with such grandiosity that, Rob Morse complains, "the only job left is swinging the pot of incense."

Royal pretensions aside, it's in propping up the crumbling edifice that old-style urbanism built that Brown has done the most harm to San Francisco. The most striking result is the city's homelessness problem—and nothing threatens San Francisco's future more. Under the pressure of homelessness, the collapse of public order has grown intolerable. A stroll down Haight Street—the counterculture's ground zero—shows how bad the problem really is. Sallow-faced teenage runaways, sullenly propped against storefronts, beg for money, while wild-eyed street people harass pedestrians on every corner. Drug dealers brazenly ply their trade on the filthy, urine-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

drenched sidewalks. Once home to flower children and free love, Haight Street now mocks the emancipatory ideals of the sixties, its atmosphere of menace the Summer of Love's legacy. As even neighborhood civil libertarians admit these days, Haight Street's 70 social service organizations—many aimed at the homeless—inexorably draw in disorder. "In the 20 years I've been here, Haight Street has never looked worse—it has gone from cutting edge to ominous and dangerous," a grim resident told a local journalist a few months back. The owner of Haight Street's Ben & Jerry's—the self-advertised liberal ice cream chain—agrees. He has to paint over graffiti on his storefront three times a week, and, like other merchants, he frequently replaces store windows, cracked or shattered in the night. He's had enough, as have many in the neighborhood.

Dorothy Williams is a former nurse who now panhandles for a living near City Hall. She's still pretty, though it's clear that living on the street has started to take its toll. Bundled against the chilly wind in a blue down jacket, she is one of San Francisco's estimated 16,000 homeless; and looking past her, toward City Hall itself, one sees at least 50 homeless men and women hitting up tourists for spare change, slowly pushing shopping carts as if in a waking dream, or huddling in corners and on steps, half asleep.

"It can't stay like this," Williams admits, surveying the scene below her. She thinks homelessness has grown worse in the past few years—because of the city's lax policies. "Oakland, Fremont, Berkeley—they all make it harder," she says. "San Francisco makes everybody lazy." She's right: San Francisco's homeless population has more than doubled under Willie Brown's lax regime.

Things were already pretty bad during the eighties. As the Reagan years brought economic prosperity to America, San Francisco's then-mayor Art Agnos held the wrongheaded notion that homelessness results from lack of affordable housing, not from self-destructive behavior. San Francisco subsequently extended the most generous benefits to the homeless the country has yet seen, all of which remain in place: a $345-a-month general assistance grant for single adults, thousands of beds in dozens of shelters, free health and dental care, no time limits on receiving help, and an array of special services, from rental assistance to "permanent supportive housing."

As benefits ballooned, Agnos also told cops not to arrest homeless squatters in public parks—they weren't hurting anybody, he pronounced, and shouldn't be punished for being victims. Predictably, hordes of homeless people, many addicted or addled, descended on the city, transforming Civic Center Plaza—the open space in front of City Hall—into what the *San Francisco Chronicle* aptly dubbed the "Mecca of America's unwashed." Others sarcastically called it "Camp Agnos." As the homeless settled in, San Francisco's quality of life plummeted, and the city's public spaces became haunts for drug pushers and prostitutes soliciting the homeless. The financial cost to the city's business community was considerable: more than $170 million a year lost in retail and restaurant sales, according to an April 1992 study, as frightened customers stayed away. San Francisco was a city under siege.

In 1991, beleaguered San Franciscans had had enough; though they're normally bleeding hearts, they're also prosperous yuppies. They elected Frank Jordan to clean up Camp Agnos. Though at first he dithered with talk of tackling the "root causes" of homelessness—exactly the mind-set that created the mess in the first place—Jordan, feeling public heat, launched Operation Matrix. The program rested upon criminologist George Kelling's "broken windows" theory: that an unrepaired broken window or a stripped car left abandoned and untowed sends the message that no one cares, encouraging would-be thugs to act on their darker impulses. Conversely, a window quickly repaired sends the opposite message: that an energetic lawful order exists, and that a potential hood should think twice before he commits a crime. No longer, then, would San Francisco tolerate "victimless" crimes such as public urination: using the crime-fighting strategy that has since worked wonders in New York, police enforced long-unused ordinances that forbade public drunkenness, sleeping in public,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

obstructing sidewalks, and a host of other quality-of-life offenses Operation Matrix worked: the homeless moved to friendlier locales or entered the city's abundant shelters, serious crime dropped 25 percent, public feelings of safety grew, and tourists, who bring $4 billion into the Bay area, flooded in (See "San Francisco Gets Tough with the Homeless," Autumn 1994.)

Willie Brown changed all that During the 1995 mayoral race, Brown made undoing Operation Matrix key to his campaign, describing the program, in language that recalled the fever years of the sixties, as "persons in uniforms operating as if they are occupational officers in a conquered land" In one of his first mayoral acts, he junked Matrix Result: the homeless are back, in force. Though police claim to write citations for quality-of-life offenses as furiously as in the days of Operation Matrix (14,000 in 1997), no one tracks how many

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

citations get paid or result in prosecution, and it's clear that, since Brown became mayor, few do. As one cop grumbled to the *San Francisco Chronicle*'s Ken Garcia, the homeless advocates' sway with Mayor Brown ensures police citations for quality-of-life offenses disappear by the time they reach the municipal court system.

By 1998, the homelessness problem had sprawled out of control—worse than in the days of Camp Agnos. The city's Department of Human Services, wielding a gigantic annual budget of $320 million, will spend $66 million this year on the homeless through its Division of Homeless Programs and $50 million more through general assistance grants, given out to 13,000 adults every month—half of whom are employable, the department itself admits. All this in a city with a total population of 780,000 or so. "We're humanistic," Brown explains, defending the city's approach. But what's humanistic about allowing 16,000 folks, 70 percent of whom are substance abusers, 40 percent of whom are mentally disturbed, to continue their self-destructive and community-damaging behavior isn't clear.

FRED LARSON/SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

One of San Francisco's many homeless, with a recognizable local twist.

These days, panhandling Dorothy Williams has a clearer grasp on the homeless problem than do city officials. City Supervisor Amos Brown (no relation to the mayor) is a case in point: he proposed that San Francisco supply the homeless with shopping carts in which they could store their worldly possessions—an encouragement to stay homeless. Supervisor Brown's foolish plan went even further: he wanted the city to create special parking areas for the homeless to lock up their city-provided carts—officially institutionalizing homelessness. While Mayor Brown hasn't yet endorsed the shopping-cart idea, a few months back he floated a notion just as absurd: setting up a mobile car park, replete with showers, toilets, and garbage service, for the 2,000 or so people in the city who live out of their cars—still technically a crime in San Francisco.

The mayor has also supported one of the pet projects of the city's homeless advocates: making the Presidio, formerly a military base and now a national park, into a fortress of homelessness. The activists want the complex's 466 vacant residential units, breathtakingly located at the mouth of San Francisco Bay, for the homeless, and San Francisco's Board of Supervisors agrees: last year, it unanimously approved a resolution asking the Presidio's board to lease the space to the city. But because many San Franciscans remain unenthusiastic about the idea, rightly fearing it would attract more vagabonds to the city, it has stalled.

For all his efforts to placate advocates, though, the homeless may yet prove Brown's undoing. San Franciscans are losing their patience—even those from San Francisco's Castro district, perhaps the most permissive community in the U.S. Castro residents and business owners, tired of frayed nerves and the drain on property values and profits that the legions of homeless sleeping in doorways and harassing customers have caused, recently formed an activist group, Community Pride and Revitalization. Their motto: Create change, don't hand it out.

In response, the mayor has grown defensive and testy on the subject. Last fall, Brown bragged that once-resplendent Golden Gate Park was vagrant-free, only to have a local television station show him, as he sat and seethed, live footage of the homeless shuffling through the park. Shortly afterward, a frustrated Brown suggested using city helicopters with heat-sensing cameras to locate and scatter homeless encampments, a sadly familiar story of unlimited tolerance suddenly giving way to authoritarian crackdown—and a plan the city thankfully hasn't yet used.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

San Francisco, like most of the country, has benefited from a steep drop in crime over the past five years. Much of the credit should go to Operation Matrix and to California governor Pete Wilson's 1994 "Three Strikes" law, which metes out automatic jail sentences for third-time offenders and which by 1998 had brought about a 40 percent drop in California's homicide rate. Even after Mayor Brown took office, San Francisco continued to participate in the wider trend: in 1997 the city's reported crime fell 6.8 percent, and there were only 45 murders all year—a 27.4 percent decrease from 1996. But the city's lax law enforcement under Brown and his longtime ally, D.A. Terence Hallinan—rooted in sixties-style ideas that so-called victimless crimes shouldn't be punished and that crime in general is society's fault—threatens to make San Francisco dangerous again.

For the first six months of 1998, murder is up a frightening 43 percent, and rape has increased too, up 21 percent.

Terence Tyrone Hallinan is the hardest-left D.A. in the country and easily as colorful a figure as the mayor. As cultural historian Stephen Schwartz recounts, Hallinan was a student radical at Berkeley in the sixties, teaching seminars on Marxism-Leninism in his father's law offices, rechristened the "San Francisco School for Social Science." Back in those heady days he went by the *nom de guerre* "Kayo." He also helped run the communist W. E. B. DuBois Club at Berkeley, where he first met—and cultivated—a young lawyer, Willie Brown. Police arrested Kayo frequently in his youth for theft and several violent assaults, one of which landed a stranger in the hospital with a broken jaw in an unprovoked attack. A light-heavyweight boxer at Berkeley, Kayo was not averse to pounding political opponents—Trotskyists particularly irked him—into submission with his well-practiced fists.

While Hallinan might have toned down his Marxism in recent years, his ideas on crime remain vintage radicalism. The D.A.'s spokesman, John Shanley, for example, attributes San Francisco's plunging crime rates to prosperity. "With a better economy, there is less need to go out and commit crimes," he says, in a classic restatement of the "root causes" theory of criminal behavior that got America's cities into so much trouble over the past 30 years. "We target violent crimes rather than low-end drug crimes," Shanley adds—an inversion of New York's quality-of-life policing approach that has made Gotham's streets safer by orders of magnitude.

Without fail, Hallinan refuses to prosecute "victimless" crimes. He wants to legalize prostitution and has appointed a hooker to a task force formed to overhaul prostitution laws. Earlier this year, Hallinan openly flouted a Justice Department crackdown on the city's "medical" cannabis club, until San Francisco superior judge William Cahill, ruling it a "public nuisance," ordered him to comply. The poorly regulated club, which preexisted the 1996 California state referendum that legalized the medical use of marijuana for gravely or terminally ill patients, was a haven for illegal drug-selling and drug use. Prior to the judge's ruling, the D.A., perhaps wistful for his student radical days, eagerly joined a street demonstration in support of the dope club, haranguing the small crowd of activists.

Unsurprisingly, Hallinan resists implementing Governor Wilson's popular Three Strikes law. As David La Bahn, deputy director of the California District Attorneys Association, complains, "It is well known within the association that San Francisco doesn't support Three Strikes." Shanley admits as much: "No one is going to go to prison for 25 years to life for stealing a pizza." With Brown and Hallinan running the show, it won't be long before even the official crime rates start to creep up again.

In fact, there are already signs that crime is on the rise. For the first six months of 1998, murder is up a frightening 43 percent, and rape has increased too, up 21 percent. Burglaries have bumped up as well, though less dramatically. And many San Francisco residents report a heightened fear of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

crime. Typical is historian Stephen Schwartz: "I go outside for a walk and I think: this place has so much to love about it," Schwartz says, "but that lasts about five seconds. Then I think: God, am I going to get killed in my house?"

A San Francisco Board of Supervisors meeting in May offers further evidence that crime is worsening. Frustrated merchants, prosecutors, and police argued that the city's low bail for drug-related crime has made San Francisco the place to go to sell drugs. For selling powdered cocaine, San Francisco sets bail at a paltry $2,500—$13,500 lower than any nearby county. Even for selling drugs to a child, San Francisco sets bail at only $10,000, while nearby Alameda County requires a more forbidding $25,000. Lieutenant Kitt Crenshaw, a narcotics cop, told the board that drug dealers flock to San Francisco from as far away as Pittsburg and Richmond to sell their wares. Along San Francisco's border with Daly City, dealers won't close a sale until they're safely on the San Francisco side, according to assistant D.A. Vernon Grigg III.

Nor is it just on Haight Street or in the Castro district that drug dealers reign. They've also taken over Dolores Park, a wooded, 13-acre, former Jewish cemetery in the city's Mission district. Garry Trudeau's graying counterculture comic strip *Doonesbury* recently poked fun at the ease with which you can buy drugs at Dolores Park. Police say they're doing what they can, but unless the city frees up more money for overtime, the cops can't increase their park presence, and the lax bail requirements mean that dealers are back in the park soon after they're arrested.

Criminality has made its way even into city agencies. San Francisco's Housing Authority, bringing back memories of such harebrained Great Society schemes as New York's Mobilization for Youth, has squandered taxpayer dollars employing neighborhood reprobates supposedly to organize their inner-city communities, according to a federal audit released last July. The audit excoriated the agency's Office of Community Relations and Involvement, headed by Brown's crony Thomas Mayfield, for pouring $1.7 million in grant funds targeted to fight drug abuse in the projects into either no-show jobs or into a pet program of Mayor Brown's that hires "at-risk" youth to patrol the projects. The patrols, critics charge, are often no more than government-subsidized drug runs by young hoodlums.

The fed-up feds have cut the authority's funding, and the city has reassigned Mayfield and given his duties to a man who turns out not to have the clinical social worker's license claimed on his résumé, because he lost it for embezzling funds from a nonprofit organization. The farce goes on.

Old-paradigm urban policies haunt San Francisco's public schools, too. Submerged in race and identity politics, they have among the worst math and reading scores of all California school districts. With Willie Brown as mayor, things won't change anytime soon.

To grasp what's wrong with San Francisco's public schools, start with a deal made 15 years ago between the NAACP and the San Francisco Unified School District. The NAACP had sued, claiming that black and Hispanic students weren't getting an education equal to that of whites. Rather than fighting the suit—despite no real evidence of discrimination—the district agreed to enter into a federally supervised consent decree.

The consent decree sets up a social engineer's paradise. It divides San Francisco's 63,000 public school students into nine ethnic groups: American Indian, Black, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Other Non-White, Other White, and Hispanic. Though California has allowed parents to enroll kids near work or day care since 1987, effectively making public school choice widespread, the decree limits the share of any one racial group to no more than 45 percent at any school. Thus Asian students, who score high on entrance exams, get shunted from the top schools, where they'd soon exceed the 45 percent quota, to less prestigious ones.

At distinguished Lowell High School, for instance, a Chinese-American must score 64 out of a maximum 69 on city admissions evaluations to get in, while a black student has to score only

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

56. "It's just absurd," says Amy Chang of the Asian American Legal Foundation. "The school district moves children around like racial objects." A group of Asian-American parents has sued to end the consent decree, but the NAACP arrogantly dismisses them, claiming to represent all minorities, including Asian-Americans. The suit has yet to be adjudicated.

Racial vigilance permeates the entire school system. The San Francisco Unified School District, for example, has sought to limit the number of blacks and Latinos suspended or kicked out of its schools. The district's false assumption, that only racism can explain the greater number of black and Hispanic students expelled, sends exactly the wrong message to unruly minority kids—that if they're black or Hispanic, they don't have to behave. In the same vein, several members of the board of education tried unsuccessfully to block a state-sponsored test that requires teachers to display tenth-grade-level reading and math skills, claiming it is racially discriminatory. And in March the board debated—and may yet adopt—a proposal to require that 40 percent of the books used in high school classes be by minority authors, as if a black or Asian kid can't learn anything from reading Dickens, because he's white.

San Francisco is fast becoming a strange, theme-park suburb of high-tech Silicon Valley, south of the city.

The educational result of all this race consciousness? Though the district boasts of rising scores over the past five years, the numbers are highly deceptive. For while scores have gone up, the number of students taking the test has fallen each year, as the district prevents kids who would drag test scores down—"limited English proficient" students, special education students, and non–English speakers—from taking the test. Moreover, the black and Hispanic students who are the supposed beneficiaries of these policies have woefully low grade-point averages: 1.86 out of 4 for blacks, 2.04 for Hispanics—which, in the context of grade inflation, means that most of these kids are failing. As journalist Debra Saunders laments, the board of education "thinks more about race than they think about excellence."

Columnist Rob Morse has called on Willie Brown to help free the public schools from the quagmire of identity politics: "By the power of his personality," Morse wrote in the *San Francisco Examiner*, "Willie could influence what goes on in the schools. . . . I'd like to see him use his moral capital to bring change." Fat chance: after all, Brown has played the race card throughout his political career. Though pressing for an end to the consent decree would win him kudos even from blacks, increasingly frustrated with the public school system, Brown isn't likely to take on the NAACP, which has supported him for decades.

Brown's supporters argue that San Francisco's economy is healthy, and with unemployment at a remarkably low 3.5 percent—the statewide rate is 6 percent—and the city enjoying a $100 million budget surplus, what's to complain about? Vacancy rates in the city's central business district are a tiny 2 percent, while tourists, who flock to the city at the rate of 130,000 a day, spent over $4 billion last year in San Francisco. The city cannily used its surplus to refinance debt and improve its bond rating. Tax revenues are up 12 percent. The mayor has won grudging respect from the business community by not increasing taxes—a good thing, since San Francisco already has the highest city taxes in California, making it one of the most expensive cities in the nation. Property values have soared. The picture certainly seems rosy.

Look closely, however, and you'll see it's a bit of an illusion: San Francisco is fast becoming a strange, theme-park suburb of high-tech Silicon Valley, south of the city. San Francisco's manufacturing industry left town in the fifties, and the military, long a major employer in the area, closed up shop earlier this decade. Though 10 percent of the city's workforce still toils in finance, insurance, and real estate, San Francisco's economy

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

increasingly depends on the spending of single, childless, twenty-something city dwellers who love the city's hip cafés, chic restaurants, and libertine culture but who work in Silicon Valley, where the average salary is a healthy $75,000. Traffic up and down Interstate 280 and Highway 101, the roads to Silicon Valley, has increased 20 percent in the past few years as a result. These cyber-yuppie reverse commuters, reflexive lifestyle liberals, have put up with the mayor's Great Society rerun so far, but whether they will continue to support Brown as the city's quality of life nose-dives remains to be seen.

As for San Francisco's internal economy, storm clouds are forming on the horizon. BankAmerica, which merged with NationsBank earlier this year to form a $64 billion banking colossus, plans to move its executive suite from San Francisco's financial district to lower-cost Charlotte, North Carolina, though its international operations will remain in the city. Since the firm employs more than 9,000 people in San Francisco, the move is sure to mean thousands of lost jobs. A spate of other recent mergers, swallowing up such San Francisco–based firms as Pacific Telesis, Montgomery Securities, and Robertson Stephens, threatens further corporate flight from this expensive city.

Equally worrisome, disgruntled noises are emanating from Multimedia Gulch, a ten-square-block area of converted warehouses that burst with software companies specializing in CD-ROMs, Internet services, and the like. Revenues of interactive media firms in San Francisco increased 150 percent last year, and Multimedia Gulch now employs 35,000 workers, up 70 percent from 1995. The highly mobile industry is worth approximately $2 billion to the city's economy. Multimedia executives could probably live with the city's inflated rents, but they grumble ominously about the long wait for required permits that makes expanding a successful business time-consuming and costly. A study by the Coopers & Lybrand accounting firm reports that close to a third of these innovative companies are considering leaving San Francisco. Should the industry trickle out of town, San Francisco's economic horizon will darken further.

San Francisco depends on its rich cyber-yuppies, its growing local high-tech sector, and its booming tourism industry to fund a grossly bloated municipal welfare state. Mayor Brown has fattened the city budget by over $1 billion in three years—a whopping 30 percent increase. Taxpayers must support both a vast empire of social services, eating up 33 percent of San Francisco's $3.9 billion 1998–99 budget, and an expensive municipal workforce represented by powerful unions. Brown refuses to consider privatization seriously, and he has hiked city worker salaries 12.9 percent since taking office and has added 2,000 city jobs. San Francisco's municipal workers now earn up to 50 percent more than government workers elsewhere in California, making them among the best-off public employees in the nation.

Brown has also showered the city's private-sector unions with favors. In February, he pushed through a new city ordinance that makes it much easier for labor activists to unionize hotels and restaurants that operate on city property or that have received financial help from the city. Unions can now duck the formal secret-ballot elections, overseen by the National Labor Relations Board, that were once obligatory before a union could gain representation of a particular shop. Now a union rep just hands out authorization cards and asks workers to sign them. If the union gets a majority of workers to sign, it's in. San Francisco is the first jurisdiction in the country to agree to this procedure, which makes unionizing a workplace quick and easy; if it spreads beyond hotels and restaurants, San Francisco businesses will crowd toward the exits.

In March, Brown gave the unions another gift: the Displaced Worker Protection Act, which protects the jobs of San Francisco's 10,000 janitors and security guards. The act requires, with few exceptions, that any contractor taking over another contractor's work must keep its janitors and security guards on its payroll for at least three months, regardless of whether it works for a city agency or a private firm. When the act passed, Ken Cleveland of San Francisco's Building Owners and Managers Association grimly concluded: "The business community got a blow to the solar plexus today." In

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

addition, the city's Board of Supervisors will soon pass, with the mayor's blessing, a New York–style "living wage" law that guarantees anyone working on a city contract a minimum $11 per hour.

In exchange for Brown's piled-on gifts, the unions offer unflagging support. The city's powerful Labor Council just gave the mayor an unprecedented early endorsement for the November 1999 mayoral race. After hearing the council's decision, Brown told them, "I don't think democracy is well served with me having an opponent"—a sentiment more befitting a Third World dictator than the mayor of a major American city.

San Francisco has always courted the counterculture, embracing everything from Beat poetry (Lawrence Ferlinghetti was named the city's first poet laureate in August) to the frazzled music, easy sex, and psychedelic drugs of the sixties, to the decadent gay bathhouses of more recent times. In what other American city, after all, could the city's entire political elite, including the mayor, attend a much-publicized birthday party—for Brown's campaign manager Jack Davis—that featured a leather-masked sadomasochist first carving a bloody pentagram into the back of a naked man and then urinating on him? As birthday-boy Davis later gushed to the local media, "It wasn't anything compared to the after-party at my house." The mayor's only response? "This is a messed-up city." In fact, San Francisco's tradition of indiscriminate tolerance goes back even further than the sixties. When poet Kenneth Rexroth came to the city in the 1920s, he noted that "it was the only city in the United States not settled overland by the spreading Puritan tradition. . . . Nobody cared what you did as long as you didn't commit any gross public crimes."

What Rexroth didn't anticipate, though, is how fiercely intolerant San Francisco would turn in pursuit of a politically correct agenda. In November 1996, Willie Brown signed local legislation that requires any agency or firm contracting with the city to offer the same benefits it offers to employee spouses to the domestic partners—homosexual or heterosexual—of unmarried employees, on pain of having its operations in the city shut down. One of the law's first targets: Catholic Charities. Like other organizations tapping city money, the city's Board of Supervisors ruled, Catholic Charities must offer domestic partnership benefits to employees—in effect, sanctioning homosexual "marriage"—or give up its $6 million in city funding. Catholic Charities buckled. By contrast, the Salvation Army commendably refused to comply and continued to offer services without city reimbursement. When it became clear the city wouldn't offer it a waiver on the domestic partnership requirement—as it has for hundreds of other charitable and non-charitable groups—the Salvation Army left town.

San Francisco's intolerance has taken on international scope. In early 1997, it demanded that United Airlines extend domestic partnership benefits to all its 86,000 employees across the globe or lose its contract to operate out of San Francisco International Airport. In response, United—operating more than half of the flights and employing 18,000 people in the city—sued, claiming the city couldn't force it to follow the law, since the federal government, not local jurisdictions, regulates the airline. In April, U.S. district judge Claudia Wilkin ruled that San Francisco "reached beyond the limits of its power within the federal government." But the war isn't over: the city is now seeking to terminate United's leases for its flight kitchen and ground-maintenance facilities at the airport.

As Mayor Willie Brown's old-paradigm thinking tightens its grip on the city, it's only a matter of time before the apparently sizzling economy begins to fizzle and the tourism industry dwindles as crime and disorder increase. Yet Brown still stands a good chance of being reelected next year. His probable opponent will be political consultant and real estate magnate Clint Reilly, whom few consider a serious candidate. Brown may well take San Francisco into the new millennium, unless voters make the clear connection between the mayor's reign and the city's newly uncivil streets.

A few years ago, San Francisco seemed ready to abandon at least some of its antiquated ideals, tired of their disastrous real-world consequences. But with Willie Brown, San Francisco's past, like a scary acid flashback, has claimed it again. •

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Yes, Vouchers Are Constitutional

Richard E. Morgan

Nothing in the U.S. Constitution or the state constitutions prohibits this highly popular school reform—as the current Supreme Court might soon agree.

It has become an American reflex over the past generation for advocates who lose in the political arena to try to kill in the courts what they can no longer defeat in the legislature. That is happening with the school voucher issue today. A recent national poll shows parents in favor of vouchers 82 to 13 percent: the majority of Americans with children in school seem to understand that only competition from outside the dysfunctional, union-dominated public school system can bring about the sweeping educational reforms the nation needs. Black parents, whose children are disproportionally stuck in educationally bankrupt inner-city schools, support vouchers even more strongly, with 84 percent in favor. But teachers' unions and their political allies, as they see their support ebb away, reply: Too bad; school vouchers are unconstitutional, so the issue is moot. Since many families would use them to send their children to Catholic and other church-related schools, vouchers violate the "separation of church and state."

Are these opponents of vouchers correct? Is there anything in the Constitution of the United States, or in the constitutions of the several states, that forbids such programs?

At the level of the federal Constitution, the answer should certainly be no. The phrase "separation of church and state" does not occur in the document (or in any of the 13 original state constitutions). The clause of the federal Constitution that is widely, but incorrectly, held to mandate "separation" is that part of Amendment One that forbids Congress to make any law "respecting an establishment of religion." The original proposal, introduced by James Madison, simply provided that a "national religion" not be "established." While the documentary record of the First Congress is too fragmentary to allow us to know precisely what the amendment's authors intended by the change they wrought in Madison's language, it is safe to say that the prohibition against laws "respecting an establishment of religion" embodied Madison's original aim (with which no one really disagreed) of forbidding Congress from establishing a national religion or granting any sect or denomination preferences that might tend in that direction.

One other thing is known for sure: the provision as finally proposed by Congress and ratified by the states was intended to prevent the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

central government from interfering in the arrangements worked out within the several states with respect to religion and the public order. After all, the primary reason the First Congress was proposing amendments was to satisfy the large multitude who worried that the new Constitution left the states too exposed to central government meddling. And, of course, half the states had some form of religious establishment in 1790—and their congressmen and senators were determined to protect those practices.

Connecticut congressman Benjamin Huntington, for instance, was quick to remind the House that in most of New England the support of ministers and the "expense of building meeting houses" were "things regulated bye laws." And while Huntington understood that the "gentleman from Virginia" did not intend the proposed amendment to preclude such arrangements, he was worried that "others might find it convenient to put another construction on it," and he wanted it clear that the provision was not meant to satisfy "those who professed no religion at all."

The establishment clause was meant to allow the states to continue to chart their own courses in church-state relations.

In sum, the establishment clause was meant to allow the states to continue to chart their own courses in church-state relations. At the national level, it precluded both an established church and sectarian favoritism, but it did not embody a policy of indifference or hostility to religion, much less a ban on all cooperative arrangements between the central government and religious institutions. As Robert A. Goldwin puts it in his new study of the framing of the amendments that became the Bill of Rights: "There is solid evidence that this Congress looked favorably on a general sort of government aid to religion, so long as it was not preferential or discriminatory."

Of course, there were those in the early Republic who did favor radical separation. In 1802 Thomas Jefferson broke with the practice of issuing Thanksgiving Day proclamations, which Washington had established and which Jefferson's successors immediately resumed. A small storm of criticism of Jefferson's administration resulted, and in a scramble to establish some cover, the president addressed a letter to the Danbury, Connecticut, Baptist Association, arguing that his action was not purely personal but was compelled by the Constitution. It was here he hatched his ill-founded metaphor asserting that the First Amendment erected a "wall of separation" between church and state. Along similar lines, in the 1830s, Kentucky senator Richard ("Rumpsey-Dumpsey") Johnson led a quixotic crusade seeking Sunday mail delivery on the grounds that its omission constituted an establishment of religion.

But such radically separationist ideas were never mainstream. For over a century and half after the ratification of the First Amendment, the states charted their own courses with respect to religion and the public order. During the nineteenth century, those with established churches gradually disestablished them, though as late as 1902 New Hampshire's Constitution empowered the Legislature to authorize towns to provide "public Protestant teachers of piety, religion and morality." As established churches receded into the past, a variety of cooperative, non-preferential arrangements between state and local governments and religious institutions flourished. In New York, for instance, the Children's Law of 1875 welcomed sectarian child-care institutions as part of a state-funded system of institutional care. In some poor, predominantly Catholic, school districts from Maine to Missouri (where supporting a separate public school for the few non-Catholic children would have been impractical), parochial schools eliminated religious instruction during most of the school day, accepted all children from the community without regard to religion, and received some public support for maintenance and for teachers' compensation. In New York, this arrangement, called the Poughkeepsie Plan, persisted until it was targeted for elimination by

ILLUSTRATIONS BY THOMAS NAST

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"UNION IS STRENGTH."

DISTRIBUTION OF THE SECTARIAN FUND.

SECTARIAN BITTERNESS.

OUR COMMON SCHOOLS AS THEY ARE AND AS THEY MAY BE.—[See Page 141.]

1871 THE GRANGER COLLECTION

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

politically powerful nativist forces late in the nineteenth century.

At the national level, wherever the federal government directly provided for local governance and social services—in the territories, the military, the Indian reservations, and the District of Columbia—it followed a similar course without constitutional embarrassment. For example, the same Congress that proposed the First Amendment to the states reenacted the Northwest Ordinance, which provided not only for freedom of religion in the territories but also for the "encouragement of religion, and education, and schools," by (among other things) setting land aside "for the purposes of religion." And in 1899 the Supreme Court approved a congressional appropriation to pay for an addition to a Roman Catholic hospital in Washington.

So where does the constitutional argument against voucher plans come from? The short answer is that, as with so much contemporary mischief, it comes from the Supreme Court—and especially, the Warren Court of the 1960s.

The developments of the sixties and seventies have their prelude in a famous 1947 Supreme Court decision called *Everson* v. *Board of Education of Ewing, New Jersey*. New Jersey had authorized local school boards to reimburse parents for the fares their children paid on regular bus lines getting to and from school—whether public or parochial school. One Arch A. Everson challenged the expenditure as violating the establishment clause. Everson was a member of the Order of United American Mechanics, a nativist organization dating from the Know-Nothing movement of the 1850s and dedicated to the exclusion of Roman Catholic institutions from American public life. The Order filed an *amicus curiae* brief in support of Everson's position. Justice Hugo Black wrote the opinion of the Court, and from the vantage point of 50 years later, it stands out as a shockingly poor piece of work.

The most fundamental issue the case presented was one of federalism, and here, it might have seemed, Everson faced an insurmountable barri-

These Nast cartoons display the ugly nativism of the 1870s, which sparked the push to ban aid to Catholic schools.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

er. For the Court to find in his favor, it would have to undo a century and a half of precedent and hold that the establishment clause applied to acts of the states. On what argument could the Court do that? Justice Black solved this problem by ignoring it; without any argument at all, he simply asserted that the states were bound by the prohibition against Congress making laws "respecting an establishment of religion."

VER CANCES.

N.—[See Page 815.]

1871 CORBIS-BETTMANN

It is difficult to overstate the seriousness of this blunder. A constitutional provision intended, in large measure, to shield the states from federal meddling with the choices they made about relations between government and religious institutions was turned into a potential engine of federal power against them. Black could do this because he did not understand the establishment clause, as both its framers and modern scholarship understand it, as serving multiple but limited purposes, one of which was to protect the federal structure of the American union. He saw it, rather, as a blunt mandate of strict separation, and he apparently concluded that, if it was important enough to have been put in the Bill of Rights as a rule for the national government, it was important enough to impose on the states as part of that "due process of law" required by the Fourteenth Amendment. His opinion contains no references to the framing or ratification of the First Amendment or to how the establishment clause was understood by any of the great nineteenth-century constitutional commentators. In 1833, for example, Justice Joseph Story had written that "the whole power over the subject of religion is left entirely to the state governments," and in 1883, Judge Thomas Cooley had explained that "a law respecting an establishment of religion," as the First Amendment puts it, would be one that would "effect a union of Church and State, or . . . establish preferences in law in favor of any one religious persuasion or mode of worship."

Instead of resting upon long-settled legal understandings, Black's opinion pivoted on Jefferson's idiosyncratic letter to the Danbury Baptists, with its naked assertion that the establishment clause had "erected a wall of separation between church and state"—a metaphor that misrepresented our constitutional history but captured perfectly the separationist fundamentalism to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which the justice had been exposed in his youth in Alabama, as a member of another nativist organization—the Ku Klux Klan.

Though Black's mangling of the establishment clause would draw plenty of fire in the future, it drew little at the time, probably because Black emerged from the Everson case looking like a moderate. For all his primitive separationism, he upheld the New Jersey law: he simply did not see returning the nickels and dimes to New Jersey parents as aid to the parochial schools. In his view, the state was aiding the schoolchildren themselves, providing for their safety—just as it did in providing smallpox vaccinations, which no one doubted could go to parochial as well as public school pupils.

In the wake of *Everson*, those favoring the traditional American policy of accommodation and cooperation between government and church-related institutions hoped that the actual, commonsensical result Black had reached might prove more important than the radically separationist part of his opinion. Perhaps as long as government programs were intended to aid students, and benefited schools only incidentally, the states might retain some flexibility. And indeed, through the decade of the 1950s it remained unclear the extent to which Justice Black's strict separationism had become the official doctrine of the Supreme Court. Decisions pointed in different directions.

"There is simply no historical foundation for the position that the Framers intended to build the 'wall of separation.'"

But hopes for judicial moderation proved illusory. In the early 1960s, the Court, under Earl Warren, returned with a vengeance to Black's broad-brush separationism in decisions striking down school prayer and otherwise commanding a thoroughgoing secularization of the American public square.

What Black had launched in *Everson* was a myth—the myth of a strict separationist American past. The sixties saw the rise of a militant secularism—a mind-set Justice Anthony Kennedy later described as "an unjustified hostility toward religion"—and the carriers of this militant secularism were precisely the liberal elites who dominated the country's intellectual and political life in that period. Black's myth was tailor-made for them, regarding religion and religious institutions, as they did, as forces of reaction and obscurantism standing in the way of secular progress—forces from which schoolchildren, in particular, needed protection. The liberals then dominating the Supreme Court faithfully reflected this attitude. Sometimes the opinion was by Black himself, sometimes by Tom Clark or Abe Fortas. The effect was to lock strict separationism tightly into constitutional law.

Surprisingly, with the arrival of Chief Justice Warren Burger in the 1970s, things got even worse. In a series of cases, beginning with *Lemon* v. *Kurtzman* in 1971, the Court struck down state efforts to include religious-school students in general programs of educational enrichment, and it evolved a new test, the "Lemon test," to be used to determine whether a public program complied with the establishment clause. The requirement was threefold: the program must have been enacted to serve a secular legislative purpose; the program's "primary effect" must neither advance nor inhibit religion; and the operation of the program must not involve government in "excessive entanglement" with church-related institutions. Any program that significantly benefited a religious school, even incidentally, the Court held, would have the "primary effect of advancing religion." Armed with this rigid formulation ("the fruit of the Lemon tree," one commentator called it), the separationist block on the Court, led by Justice William Brennan, continued to scythe down most programs that aided church-related schools into the early 1980s.

This militant judicial separationism reached its zenith in Brennan's majority opinion in *Aguilar* v. *Felton* in 1985. New York City, using federal funds under Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Education Act of 1965, provided services to educationally deprived children in low-income areas by allowing public school teachers to go into church-related schools to teach math and reading and to provide guidance counseling. The schools removed religious symbols from classrooms during the public school teachers' visits, and city education officials kept watch to ensure that the publicly provided instruction really was kept separate from programs of religious instruction. Brennan pounced on this monitoring, declaring that it constituted "excessive entanglement." The city was reduced to buying trailers (with scarce educational dollars) and parking them at the curbside outside schools, so the children could troop out to receive the services.

But even as Brennan triumphed in *Aguilar*, an intellectual counterattack against the strict separationist misreading of the establishment clause was finally gaining traction and undercutting the shallow historical foundation on which the Court's separationism rested. Among the most important examples of the new scholarship, Walter Berns's *The First Amendment and the Future of American Democracy* had appeared in 1976, followed by Michael Malbin's *Religion and Politics: The Intentions of the Authors of the First Amendment* in 1978 and Robert Cord's *Separation of Church and State* in 1982. Carefully and persistently, these authors exploded the separationist myth that Black had conjured up in 1947. Even within the legal academy (where strict separationism had been credulously accepted in the 1960s), the Lemon test was coming under criticism from such figures as Professors Philip Kurland and Michael McConnell of the University of Chicago Law School and Mary Ann Glendon of the Harvard Law School as a wooden and unwieldy instrument for dealing with contemporary America's multiplicity of differently nuanced church-state issues.

All this ferment came to a head in a lengthy, impassioned dissenting opinion by then-justice Rehnquist in a case called *Wallace* v. *Jaffree*, decided a few weeks after *Aguilar* in the spring of 1985. Here the Brennan bloc struck down a state law providing for a moment of silence as part of the opening of the public school day. The majority insisted this was a backdoor encouragement of prayer by the state. Incredible as it now appears, Rehnquist's dissent contained the first full review of the historical evidence on the framing and original meaning of the establishment clause by any member of the Court, and his conclusion was devastating: "The Establishment Clause did not require government neutrality between religion and irreligion nor did it prohibit the federal government from providing non-discriminatory aid to religion. There is simply no historical foundation for the position that the Framers intended to build the 'wall of separation' that was constitutionalized in *Everson*."

Things have never been the same for radical separationism; it has been on the intellectual defensive ever since, with major scholarship adding to its discomfort year by year, and new members of the Court distancing themselves from the doctrine. Despite labored attempts by Justice David Souter and by a few die-hard professors, the intellectual dominance of Warren-era separationism cannot be restored either within the judiciary or the academy.

Does this mean the battle to reclaim the constitutional law of church and state has been won and the future of vouchers is assured? No; but the outlook is brighter than ever before. Two justices, Clarence Thomas and Antonin Scalia, are in full agreement with Rehnquist's traditionalist reading of the establishment clause. Two others, Anthony Kennedy and Sandra Day O'Connor, are not prepared to turn their backs on *Everson*, but they have both been critical of what they see as mechanical applications of the Lemon test and have shown some flexibility on church-state issues. Four justices continue to constitute a strict separationist bloc—John Paul Stevens, David Souter, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and Stephen Breyer—but even here some observers suspect, based on hints buried in earlier decisions, that one or more of them might support vouchers. Professor Laurence Tribe, Harvard's left-leaning legal guru (who personally thinks vouchers are a "lousy idea"), is also a very shrewd Court watcher, and he predicts that six or seven justices might vote to sustain them.

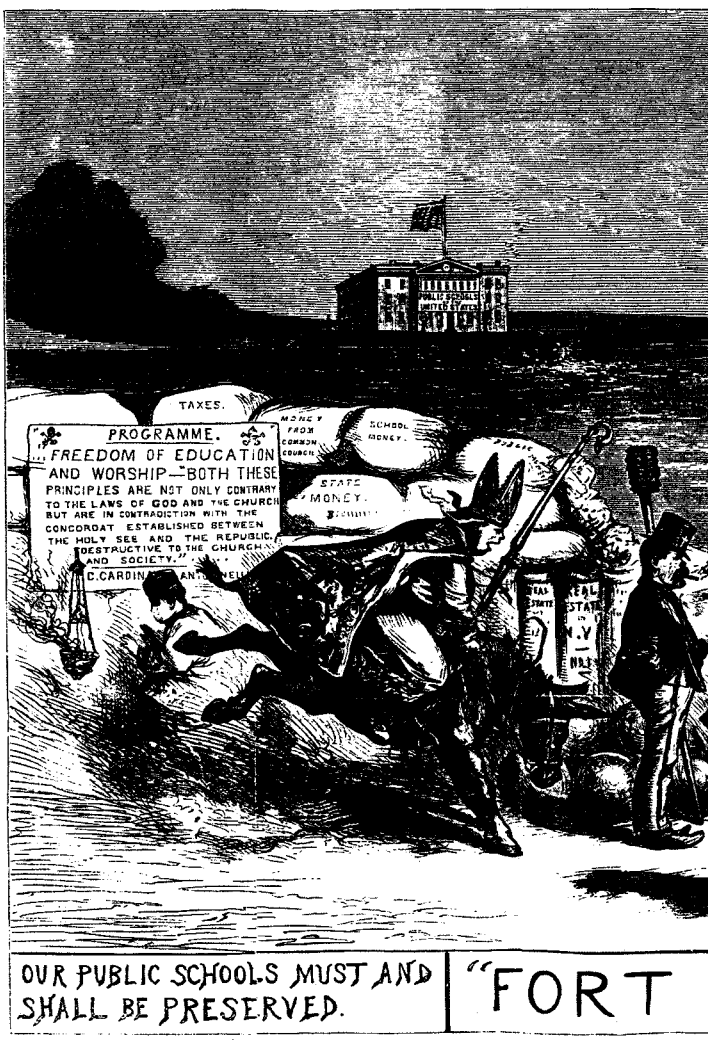
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Furthermore, the Court has already made some significant breaks with its separationist past in its case law—notably, its reversal, in the spring of 1997, of *Aguilar* v. *Felton*. Invoking a little-used Supreme Court rule that allows one of the original parties to a case to move to reopen it if subsequent decisions of the Court have "eroded" the foundation of the original decision, New York City persuaded the Court to reopen—and overturn—*Aguilar*. Justice O'Connor, writing for the majority, held that recent decisions of the Court had modified the Lemon test: no longer would incidental benefits to religious institutions be held to have the effect of "advancing religion," and no longer would it be presumed that public employees functioning in sectarian institutional settings would require the kind of government monitoring that would create "excessive entanglement." As a result, the Board of Education teachers could go back into the parochial schools, and the trailers could be hauled away.

This new decision, *Agostini* v. *Felton*, had an almost immediate salutary effect in the legal battle over vouchers. The Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, one of the nation's most promising voucher experiments, had been tied up in a legal challenge for years and was before the Wisconsin Supreme Court when *Agostini* came down. Last June, in a 4–2 decision, that court sustained the program against both state and federal constitutional challenges. The impact of Justice O'Connor's opinion in the New York case was evident throughout Judge Donald W. Steinmetz's majority opinion in Wisconsin. While dutifully noting that on the federal establishment clause issue he was required to follow *Lemon*, Steinmetz noted that its "continued authority . . . is uncertain," and he treated it as a general guide with plenty of play at the joints.

Various parties to the Wisconsin suit have filed petitions asking the U.S. Supreme Court to review the decision, and we should know within the next few months whether the justices will agree to do so. But even should the Court decline to take the Wisconsin case, there are enough others moving forward around the country (including cases from Ohio, Vermont, and Maine) to make a Supreme Court resolution of the matter likely sooner rather than later.

But even if things are looking up for vouchers at the federal constitutional level, what about the state constitutions? Many of them, including New York's, contain a "Blaine amendment"—a provision that specifically prohibits state support of religious schools. It is often argued that in these

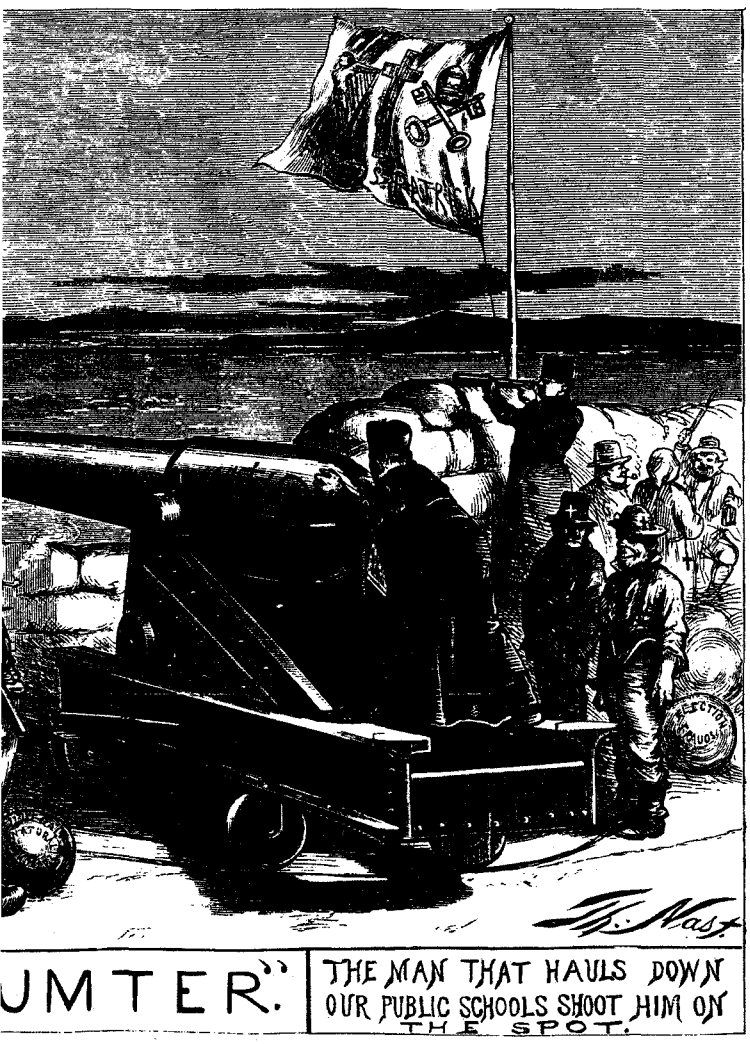

TAXES.
PROGRAMME.
FREEDOM OF EDUCATION AND WORSHIP—BOTH THESE PRINCIPLES ARE NOT ONLY CONTRARY TO THE LAWS OF GOD AND THE CHURCH BUT ARE IN CONTRADICTION WITH THE CONCORDAT ESTABLISHED BETWEEN THE HOLY SEE AND THE REPUBLIC, DESTRUCTIVE TO THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY."
STATE MONEY.
SCHOOL MONEY.
OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS MUST AND SHALL BE PRESERVED.
"FORT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

states, at least, voucher plans are unconstitutional, whatever the U.S. Supreme Court decides. This argument is just as wrongheaded as arguments relying on the federal establishment clause.

Seeing why requires a brief historical detour. The mid-1870s saw the first of three major surges of bitterly anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant nativist sentiment that disfigured post–Civil War America. (The second, particularly relevant to New York, was in the mid-1890s, and the third in the early 1920s.) In 1875 the faltering Grant administration, stained by scandal and casting about for a way to revive Republican prospects before the election of 1876, moved to exploit this resurgent anti-Catholicism. Grant himself delivered a tub-thumping speech before the veterans of the Army of the Tennessee, urging them to see that "not one dollar appropriated" for education be spent to support any but "free"—that is, government-run—schools.

At this point, that prince of political opportunists, James G. Blaine, the Maine Republican who was minority leader of the House of Representatives, took the lead (it would be in Blaine's 1884 presidential campaign that the Democrats would find themselves branded as the party of "Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion"). He introduced the following amendment to the U.S. Constitution: "No state shall make any law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; and no money raised by taxation in any state for the support of the public schools . . . shall ever be under the control of any religious sect." Blaine's amendment passed the House 180 to 7, but with 98 members not voting. In the Senate, a weaker version fell short of the necessary two-thirds vote.



1870 THE GRANGER COLLECTION

But thereafter, the idea of writing into state constitutions an explicit provision guaranteeing that Catholic parochial schools would never receive a share of the common school fund became a leading item on the agenda of nativist thought and agitation. It received strong support from such benighted and intolerant groups as the American Protective Association, which spearheaded the anti-Catholic insurgency of the mid-1890s, and the revived Ku Klux Klan, the most powerful organization in the nativist outbreak of the 1920s. Responding to these pressures, a number of states added these provisions to their constitutions.

New York's Blaine amendment (actually Article XI, Section 3, of the state Constitution) provides that "neither the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

state nor any subdivision thereof shall use its property, directly or indirectly, in aid or maintenance . . . of any school or institution of learning wholly or in part under the control or direction of any religious denomination, or in which any denominational tenet or doctrine is taught. . . ."

New York framed its present Constitution in 1894, at the peak of that decade's anti-Catholic furor. The American Protective Association was a major political force upstate that year, purporting to defend "true Americanism" against the "subjects of an un-American ecclesiastical institution" and retailing bogus papal encyclicals calling on Catholics to "exterminate all heretics." A more genteel (but even more effective) nativist formation, centered in the city and the southern counties, styled itself the National League for the Protection of American Institutions. Historians disagree as to the relative degrees of influence these groups exercised over the leadership of the Republican Party that controlled the Constitutional Convention, but all concur that, in winning the inclusion of the school provision, nativist influence was decisive. The tone was set by John Jay, urbane great-grandson of the Founding Father and a leading New York City anti-Catholic, who denounced "the Roman hierarchy, with whose widely organized and relentless hostility to American schools and American principles our people . . . are fast becoming familiar." (The nativists failed in their effort to include in the Constitution a ban on state support of religiously affiliated hospitals and orphanages, principally because the Jewish community maintained a number of these, and the combined strength of Jewish and Catholic agitation was enough to determine the issue.)

James G. Blaine

Those who would today resort to New York's Blaine amendment (or to similar provisions in other states) to attack voucher programs ought to be ashamed of themselves. Wherever adopted, such provisions were the handiwork of men whose vision of America was anything but pluralistic; they are part of the darker side of our history. It is a bitter irony that some of the groups now most ready to go to court on the basis of Blaine provisions—the American Civil Liberties Union, for instance, and the Anti-Defamation League—were originally organized to combat nativism and the kind of One-Hundred-Percent-Americanism that sought to marginalize non-WASP newcomers. And why in heaven's name should the NAACP be poised to defend the handiwork of groups, including the Klan, that were uniformly hostile to the aspirations of America's black people? Moreover, viewing religious schools, and post–Vatican II Roman Catholic schools in particular, as dangerous threats to American liberty is, to say the least, atavistic.

Aside from their unsavory origins, Blaine amendments are not, as a legal matter, fatal to school choice plans that include religious schools. What is forbidden by New York's Article XI, Section 3, for instance, is "aid," and there is no reason—historical, logical, or legal—to understand this term as encompassing any and all monies that might flow to church-related schools as a result of some governmental program. In affirming the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, the Wisconsin Supreme Court had to deal with an objection based on a Blaine-type provision in the Wisconsin Constitution. In response, Judge Steinmetz and his colleagues relied on an earlier Wisconsin decision in a case upholding tuition payments for veterans at religiously affiliated high schools and colleges: "The contention that financial benefit accrues to religion from [this program] is . . . untenable. Only

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the increased cost to such schools occasioned by the attendance of beneficiaries is to be reimbursed. They are not enriched by the service they render. Mere reimbursement is not aid."

And this was exactly the position the New York State Court of Appeals took on the last occasion it was asked to construe Article XI, Section 3. The decision was in 1967, upholding an early Rockefeller program that lent publicly purchased textbooks to independent schools, including those with religious affiliations. With respect to the Blaine objection, Judge John F. Scileppi wrote: "Since there is no intention to assist parochial schools as such, any benefit accruing to those schools is a collateral effect of the statute, and, therefore, cannot be properly classified as the giving of aid directly or indirectly." Thus, the seemingly ferocious ban in New York's Blaine amendment against giving aid to church-related schools either "directly or indirectly" collapses in the case of vouchers, once it is understood that, absent an "intention to assist," no aid is involved at all.

After all, what the original backers of Blaine amendments were aiming at was the proposal, made by certain adventurous Catholic spokesmen in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, that parochial schools should receive equal government funding with the public schools. Such a general governmental underwriting of a religious school system, to which church authorities exhorted Catholic parents to send their children, is altogether different from what happens under a voucher plan. Here public funds are placed at the disposal of parents in a program that is neutral among various kinds of schools—the voucher might be used at a better public school in another district or even another town; it might be used at a charter school; or it might be used at a private school, either religious or non-religious. The independent decisions of non-governmental third parties guide the transmission of funds. Constitutional language designed a century ago to preclude the complete funding of a sectarian school system cannot be stretched to apply to vouchers today.

The constitutional assault on vouchers is as perverse at the state level as it is at the federal. After all, for many years vouchers have been acceptable at religiously affiliated colleges and universities and at preschool and day-care facilities. Why should K-through-12 be different? The traditional American understanding of the separation of church and state is one of pragmatic flexibility, open to accommodations between religion and the public order so long as these are non-discriminatory and not coercive of conscience. The strict separationism of the old nativists, and of Justice Black and the Warren Court, were aberrations.

Of course, defenders of the discredited views still control many commanding heights in the media, the universities, and the legal profession. Justice Black's *Everson* version of separation held sway for almost half a century, taught from middle school to law school. Many judges still accept it uncritically. The liberal establishment is determined to protect it and extend it into a new century: "Breaching the Church-State Wall," the *New York Times* cried in alarm, in response to the Wisconsin voucher decision.

The accumulated result of years of separationist bullying was hilariously revealed a few years ago when former president George Bush was asked to recall his thoughts as a young naval aviator, shot down and pitched into the waters of the South Pacific. "What sustains you in times like that?" he said. "Well, you go back to fundamental values. I thought about Mother and Dad and the strength I got from them, and God, and faith—and the separation of church and state." Now, we are not really to suppose that, as he frantically paddled that "little yellow raft off the coast of an enemy-held island," Lieutenant Bush was reflecting on Jefferson's letter to the Danbury Baptists. What was operating was the reflex of an experienced, late-twentieth-century American politician: better not invoke the Deity, even in such a profoundly personal context, without immediately appeasing the strict separationists.

It is time to put an end to such nonsense.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

EVERETT COLLECTION

A 1947 tribute to Babe Ruth

No to Sports Stadium Madness

Sol Stern

It's a widely accepted maxim of New York politics that no mayor can afford to be remembered as someone who stood by helplessly while the Yankees, the Big Apple's oldest and most beloved sports franchise, abandoned the city. Rudy Giuliani happens to be a lifelong Yankee fan who clearly relishes every moment he spends in team owner George Steinbrenner's box at Yankee Stadium. So it's understandable that this particular mayor would be even more attentive than most to Steinbrenner's warning that he's about to leave town unless New York City gives him a brand-new ballpark with lots of luxury boxes and other expensive amenities.

Even so, Giuliani's determination to use a half-billion dollars of taxpayer money to build a glittering new field of dreams for the Yankees on Manhattan's West Side is a terrible idea. It is a dismaying retreat from the pledge of lowering taxes and reducing government intrusion into the economy that helped get the mayor elected in the first place. Make no mistake: this is not just one more in a long list of business-retention deals involving tax breaks for corporations with clout at City Hall. With a price tag that could reach well over $1 billion—in hard cash, not tax concessions—the Manhattan stadium project would be the most expensive publicly funded facility in the history of professional sports. More significantly, it would create the precedent of city government trying to make investment decisions in the private market by transferring tax revenues directly from one group of Manhattan businesses into the coffers of a more favored business. That's the exact reverse of the fiscal policies Mayor Giuliani needs to be following to help the city achieve real economic growth—the biggest unmet challenge of his otherwise successful administration.

With New York's politicians debating just *how much* government should do to help out the private business called the Yankees, it seems almost quaint to recall that the House that Ruth Built 75 years ago was financed entirely by the then owners of the team. That private investment paid off handsomely as the Yankees flourished. George

A tax-funded Yankee Stadium in Manhattan is exactly the wrong idea.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Steinbrenner's original 1973 investment of about $10 million has also been returned umpteen times over, and, according to recent press reports, Steinbrenner and Cablevision have been discussing a sale of the franchise for a figure in the range of $500 million.

For the past several years, however, Steinbrenner has been arguing that Yankee Stadium has become obsolete. He has complained loudly that the run-down neighborhood in the southwest Bronx where the stadium is located makes it impossible to attract enough paying customers to keep the Yankees competitive. Never mind that even playing in the *déclassé* Bronx, and in its allegedly outmoded stadium, the team remains the richest franchise in baseball—indeed, in all of professional sports. Although the Yankees only came in fifth in stadium revenues during the 1996 world championship year, the club's total revenues were $129 million—$26 million more than the amount earned by the next-closest franchise and more than twice the average of all major-league teams. What makes the difference is the media revenue the team derives from being in New York City—$70 million in 1996. Steinbrenner, or whoever owns the Yankees, will ultimately have to think twice or three times before deciding to leave the most lucrative media market in the country.

With professional sports leagues continuing to enjoy protected monopoly status, and with more and more cities competing with one another for an artificially limited number of franchises, the owners have usually found themselves in the driver's seat when bargaining with government officials over stadium deals. As a result, public subsidies to professional sports teams are now costing the country's taxpayers about $500 million per year. In the 1990s, states and localities built six major-league baseball stadiums, but the owners of the respective teams contributed only 13 percent of the total costs. Paul Allen, the co-founder of Microsoft and the third-wealthiest man in America (net worth: $17 billion), recently offered to buy the Seattle Seahawks football team, but only on condition that the city of Seattle pay 75 percent of the estimated $425 million cost of a new stadium. In 1982, the state of Minnesota and the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul built a brand-new, state-of-the-art domed stadium for the Minnesota Twins. The Twins' owner, Carl Pohlad, is now insisting that the 16-year-old stadium is obsolete. Threatening to move the Twins, he is demanding that Minneapolis build him another brand-new, baseball-only stadium at a cost of several hundred million dollars.

Very few elected officials at the state or local level have been willing to call the team owners' bluff and say no to this mug's game. Thus, we have a situation neatly summed up in a study entitled "Sports Stadium Madness," issued by the Heartland Institute, a Chicago-based conservative think tank: "The U.S. is in the grip of a massive taxpayer-financed spending spree on sports stadiums."

In this climate, it's not hard to see why George Steinbrenner figured that he, too, could get a brand-new stadium at the city's expense. Despite enjoying a sweetheart lease for the current Yankee Stadium (the city has collected just a few million dollars in rent from the Yankees over the past two decades, while the value of the franchise has gone up 50-fold), Steinbrenner believes, not unreasonably, that he can get more. Much more.

The first public suggestion that Steinbrenner's problems in the Bronx might be solved with a brand-new, taxpayer-financed stadium on Manhattan's West Side came from onetime Cuomo administration officials Vincent Tese and Meyer Frucher in the early nineties. The Cuomo administration had just finished building the $2 billion Javits Convention Center on the same West Side—complete with huge cost overruns, sweetheart deals with the construction industry, mob control of the facility, and, most significantly, never-to-be-realized promises of further economic development on the West Side. Now Tese, former UDC head, and Frucher, head of Battery Park City, were at their state capitalist endeavors again—promising big economic returns for the city if it built a stadium on a platform over the abandoned rail yards located just a few blocks from the Javits Center. (At the time, Frucher happened to be a top executive of the giant Olympia

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and York real estate firm, owner of a large parcel of land next to the proposed stadium site.)

Studies conducted for the city in 1996 by the KPMG accounting firm and the Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum architectural firm concluded that a baseball-only stadium on the West Side would cost at least $850 million. However, given the experience of cost overruns on similar, publicly financed construction projects in the past, including the infamous Javits Center, the final figure could easily reach as high as $1.5 billion—or about three times the amount spent on the most costly new stadium in the country. It was obvious that the Yankee owner—even if he were so inclined—wasn't in a position to finance something that would cost about three times the value of the entire Yankee franchise and about 12 times the team's annual revenues.

Unfazed by the vastness of the project, the Giuliani administration jumped on the West Side stadium bandwagon. In a stunning reversal of his previous pledge to eliminate the commercial rent tax, the mayor decided that if the city kept this onerous levy going for three additional years, it would generate $500 million that could be used to finance the stadium. City Hall would then be forcing all the businesses south of 96th Street in Manhattan to pay the capital costs of a facility from which one other business would receive the primary benefit. Such benefit as the city's economy might receive would be extremely indirect, since the players who receive the lion's share of the team's revenues aren't New Yorkers and spend almost all their money out of the city.

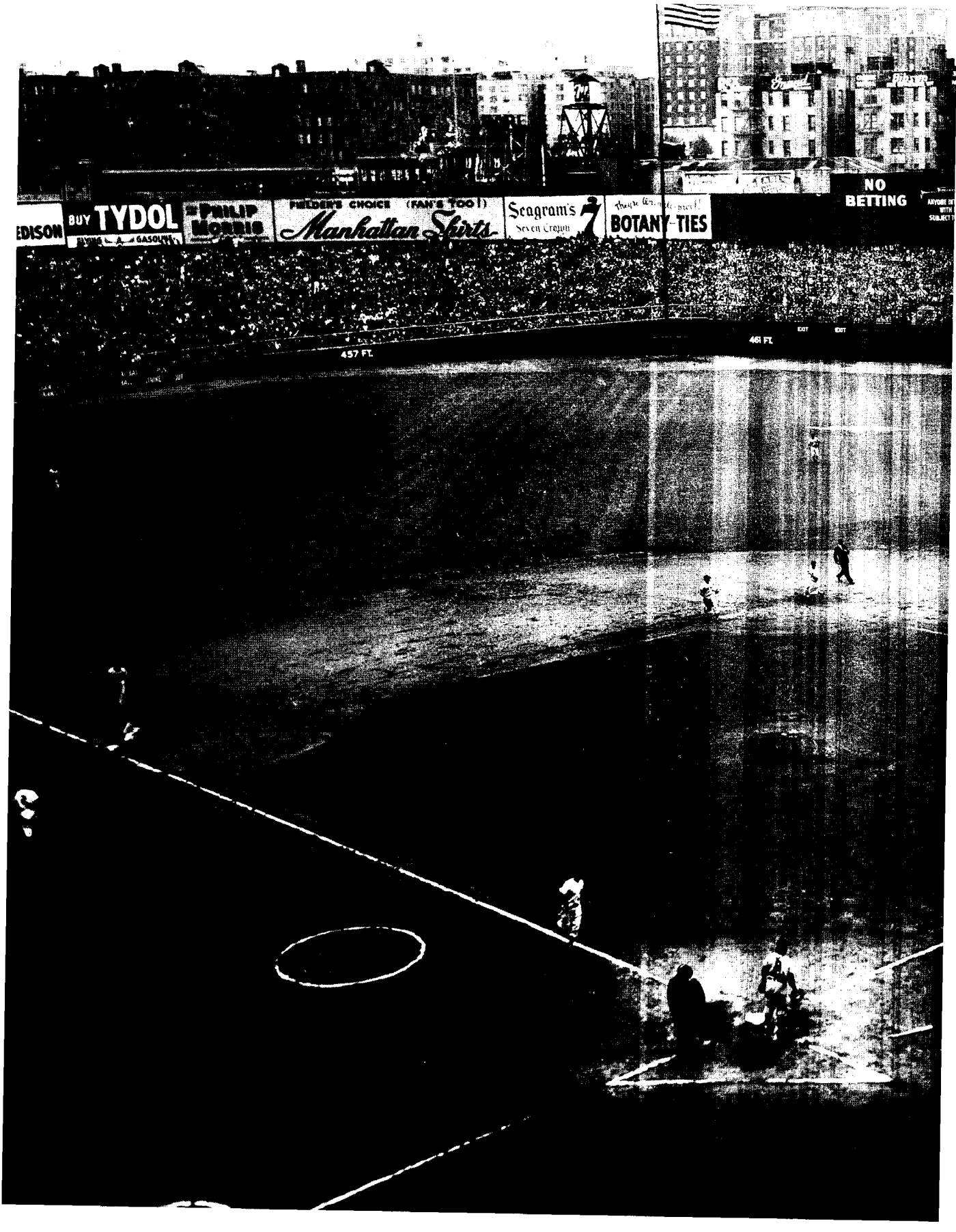
Meddling in the private capital market was characteristic of the failed economic policies of the Carey and Cuomo administrations, which soaked taxpayers for such megaprojects as the Javits Center and Battery Park City. These government-initiated developments made a small group of contractors, real estate firms, bond houses, and law firms very rich, while doing little for the overall economy—though at least most of the money stayed in New York City. In the meantime, the state's debt mounted. William J. Stern, a chairman of the Urban Development Corporation under Cuomo (and now a *City Journal* contributing editor), has described this policy as "state capitalism." It is based on the almost universally discredited idea that government bureaucrats are better equipped to allocate capital for the city's economic expansion than the private capital market is.

That's not the policy that those who voted for Rudy Giuliani expected. The Giuliani agenda, supporters thought, included reducing the outsized role of city government, lowering taxes, and encouraging the private economy. Giuliani seemed to be honoring that commitment two years ago when he proposed eliminating the commercial rent tax, perhaps the most counterproductive of the many taxes that the city imposes on its business base and a perfect embodiment of the wrongheaded economic policies previous city administrations followed. For Giuliani to renege now on the promise he made to the business community sends a clear message that his administration is not as serious about reducing the cost of doing business in the city as he led supporters to believe, and that businesses can't take his economic promises seriously enough to incorporate them into their financial planning.

The players who receive the lion's share of the team's revenues aren't New Yorkers and spend almost all their money out of the city.

Like the Cuomo administration, the Giuliani administration has tried to justify its venture into state capitalism as an economic boon for the city. Stung by criticisms about the enormous cost of the stadium project, the administration engaged in some dubious economic forecasting. Last spring the mayor's office asked the City Planning Department and the Economic Development Corporation to provide it with estimates of the economic impact on the city of the various alternative stadium proposals. In April, Joseph Rose and Charles Millard, the commissioners of the two agencies, replied with a five-page memorandum.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

GLOBE PHOTOS

Were the projections in the memo to be believed, one could only conclude that the city ought to be in the permanent business of building sports stadiums and other entertainment facilities. According to the two commissioners, the taxpayers' investment in the West Side stadium will be returned many times over. Their memorandum stated that the "total annual economic impact" of building the new stadium would be $1.12 billion, representing an increase over the economic activity generated by the current Yankee Stadium of $1.03 billion.

The major source of this huge amount of additional economic activity, according to the memo, would be the "2.25 million square feet of additional development" on the West Side that the stadium would spark. "For example," said the memo, "this development might include two 600-room tourist hotels, new restaurants, a mix of mall-type retail stores, one or more anchor stores, a multiplex cinema, and three 200,000-square-foot office buildings." Based on this projection, the commissioners also calculated that the city would take in $46 million per year in additional taxes.

And how did the two Giuliani commissioners come up with the exact numbers to justify this prediction of a West Side commercial boom? Calls to their offices produced no answers. Nor did a call to the city consultant on the stadium financing, Philadelphia-based Public Financial Management, produce any further enlightenment. According to an official at PFM, the city never asked the company to do any economic projections of so-called ancillary economic development that the West Side stadium might produce. The same official noted that the projected costs of the West Side stadium are so high because of the presumption that anything built in New York will be 40 percent more expensive than it would be anywhere else in the country. Reasons: the highest tax rates in the country, featherbedding construction unions, and excessive city and state regulation of private economic activity.

The House that Ruth Built was 100 percent privately financed.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Unable to back up the less-than-weighty Rose-Millard memo, the administration is now saying that it intends to commission another study to support its projections on West Side economic development. One can only wait and see.

In the meantime, what we have on the table are dozens of reputable economic studies and analyses that argue that sports stadiums, whatever other reasons cities may have for building them, cannot reasonably be justified by expectations of increased economic activity. This consensus runs almost across the board, from economists on the right to those on the left.

Last spring the city's Independent Budget Office, New York's recently established municipal version of the federal GAO, released a professionally done study that raised serious questions about any general economic payoff to the city from the new stadium. While conceding that such a facility would greatly increase attendance and revenues for the Yankees and create enough new jobs to increase city tax collection by about $5 million, the study debunked the notion that there would be a broader economic dividend for the city economy. "Research consistently finds," the study concluded, "that new stadiums do not produce economic growth in metropolitan areas. . . . Stadiums do not lead to increases in tourism, nor do they serve as a significant attraction to non-retail establishments."

The administration often argues that the IBO is politically tainted. But consider the aforementioned Heartland Institute. It has taken the position that "the net economic benefit of professional sports for a host city is usually negligible, and may even be negative," and it has recommended fan and taxpayer revolts against "sports stadium madness." There is also the free-market-oriented Pioneer Institute in Boston, which has strongly argued against government-aided stadium projects, because "publicly funded convention and sports facilities almost never generate enough revenue to return any of the capital invested." At a conference the institute ran several years ago about a proposal to provide public subsidies for a sports/convention facility in Boston, a representative from the World Bank stated that if Boston were a developing country, the bank would recommend against this project.

The liberal Brookings Institution recently published *Sports, Jobs & Taxes*, a collection of academic studies on the economic impact of new stadiums. "The overwhelming consensus of opinion in these studies," Brookings concluded, "is that the local economic effect of a sports facility is between nonexistent and extremely modest."

Despite all this evidence, elected officials sometimes succeed in convincing the public that sports stadiums are worthwhile investments in local economic development. That's because new businesses *do* sprout up around relocated stadiums. No doubt, a new stadium on the West Side would attract new souvlaki stands and souvenir shops, new bars and restaurants, and possibly even a new hotel. Because attendance at Yankee games would increase—including attendance by fans from New Jersey, Westchester, and Rockland—some of the revenue these new businesses would generate might come out of the pockets of out-of-towners who might not otherwise have spent their money in the city. But a substantial amount of the revenue, Brookings' studies of Cleveland and Baltimore show, would represent merely a shift of entertainment spending from one part of the city to another.

More important, when arguing that a new stadium will have a "multiplier effect" in stimulating new business start-ups, public officials conveniently ignore the "de-multiplier" effect, which works as follows. When government decides to take money, in the form of taxes, from one group of businesses in favor of another business, the city loses the potentially productive investments that the taxed businesses might have made with those funds. In the case of the West Side stadium plan, no one has asked the following question: What if the tax money spent on building the stadium were left in the pockets of the Manhattan businesses and used in the private market? The evidence is overwhelming that a substantial percentage of that $500 million would be reinvested in business expansions and start-ups. This would result in far more economic growth than any eco-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nomic activity induced by the stadium, since private businessmen have an overwhelmingly better record as investors than government bureaucrats.

In a highly publicized visit to Camden Yards last spring, Mayor Giuliani gushed about the beauty and comfort of the new stadium, built with the help of the city of Baltimore and state of Maryland in 1992. He also took the opportunity to repeat the claim made by some Baltimore boosters and baseball people that everyone benefited from the public expenditure on the new stadium. According to the currently popular version, the Baltimore Orioles received more revenues and so could sign up more top players. As a result, the team moved up in the American League standings, drawing in still more fans to the stadium. Meanwhile, the people of Baltimore and Maryland not only had a better team to root for, but they also enjoyed expanded economic activity and jobs in the waterfront area near the stadium. In turn, city and state government received more taxes because of the higher revenues accruing to the Orioles, as well as from the expanded economic activity the stadium encouraged.

Parts of this version of the "Camden Yards miracle" are certainly true. Immediately following the construction of Camden Yards, average attendance at the stadium increased from 28,000 to 45,000. Most of the increased revenues to the team went to player salaries. In a few years, the Orioles went from being perennial also-rans to garnering division championships and getting into the post-season playoffs.

However, several recent definitive economic studies have demolished the myth that building the stadium led to overall economic betterment for the city and state. After a detailed cost-benefit analysis of the new stadium, Johns Hopkins University economists Bruce W. Hamilton and Peter Kahn reached the following conclusion: "Even at Camden Yards, public expenditure on the baseball stadium cannot be justified on the grounds of local economic development." The authors actually put numbers on the alleged economic payoff to Baltimore and Maryland residents: "We estimate that baseball at Camden Yards generates approximately $3 million in annual economic benefits to the Maryland economy, at an annual cost to the taxpayers of Maryland of approximately $14 million." Though economic activity increased considerably in the spruced-up waterfront area near the stadium, much of this represented a relocation of businesses from other parts of the city. And while it was true that Orioles fans were spending a lot more money in and around the new stadium, this too, was money that was shifted from expenditures in other Baltimore entertainment venues. Baltimore was an economically troubled city before the building of the new stadium. It still is.

"Research consistently finds that new stadiums do not produce economic growth in metropolitan areas."

In light of the mountain of negative findings in other cities, City Hall's vision of new hotels and office towers rising on the West Side as a result of a new stadium is as dubious as it is unsubstantiated. Such wild projections of general economic benefits accruing from publicly financed facilities were characteristic of the flawed economic development strategy of the Cuomo administration. It's a strategy that helped push the state's debt almost to the breaking point yet didn't succeed in taking New York's private economy out of the economic doldrums.

Anyone who has visited Rudy Giuliani's office at City Hall can testify to the depth of the mayor's passion for the Yankees. His anteroom, a shrine to Yankee supremacy, is lined with historical photos of the team's great moments, along with a newspaper headlining Babe Ruth's 60th home run. Growing up as a Yankee fan in Dodger-loving Brooklyn may be one of the sources of the mayor's legendary tenacity in the face of opposition; it certainly helps explain why he is so determined to get his way on the stadium.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FPG

The eighth Yankees-Giants World Series game of 1921 begins.

Nevertheless, his preoccupation with this issue has not served his administration or the city well

When the mayor put the proposal to use the commercial-rent tax funds into the budget, City Council Speaker Peter Vallone was easily able to defeat the budget item in the Council. Vallone also got the Council to approve a referendum on this fall's ballot that would have allowed city voters to voice their preference for keeping the Yankees in the Bronx. In a countermove, the mayor then trumped Vallone by appointing a City Charter Revision Commission, whose proposals, under city law, will push any other referendum item off the ballot. But the mayor's hastily put-together Charter Revision Commission was so widely derided as a transparent ploy that he suffered a political setback. In a recent poll, 70 percent of New Yorkers indicated a preference for keeping the Yankees in the Bronx.

This doesn't mean that the politicians opposing the mayor's stadium plan are right, either, in their campaign to keep the Yankees in the Bronx. They have adopted a populist stance for crass electoral advantage. Peter Vallone, for example, is running for governor, and it would have helped him to have a stadium referendum on the ballot to bring out a larger vote in the Bronx. Much of the political opposition to the stadium project has focused on the "social justice" consequences of any move by the Yankees to Manhattan. Taking the Yankees out of the Bronx, it is said, would have a devastating economic effect on the city's poorest borough and thus hurt its predominantly poor and minority residents. Some have even argued, laughably but inevitably, that helping Steinbrenner move from the Bronx would constitute a form of racism.

In the midst of all this, few have noticed that all the counterproposals for keeping the Yankees in the Bronx would also involve the use of a substantial amount of city tax funds either to build the Yankees a new stadium or rehabilitate the old one—$535 million in the case of Bronx borough

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

president Fernando Ferrer's recently-announced scheme. Speaker Vallone has never voiced any objection to a concurrent proposal that the city pay part of the cost of a new stadium for the Mets in his home borough of Queens.

In the ideal case, a mayor of New York ought to put his foot down and cut through "sports stadium madness." While making a reasonable offer to keep the Yankees in New York (including offering infrastructure and transportation improvements around the stadium and perhaps even some minimal tax incentives), such a mayor would make it clear that the overall goal of improving the economic prospects of all New Yorkers is more important than the so-called public good that comes from the presence of the Yankees. Such a mayor would also improve his bargaining power with the Yankee owner by warning New Jersey of serious repercussions from an offer to move the Yankees to the Meadowlands. (And where would Steinbrenner go if he could not swing a sweetheart deal with New Jersey? Charlotte?)

GLOBE PHOTOS

A hero's example

Given Giuliani's personal history, perhaps this is too much to expect. But at the very least, the mayor and the city would have been better served had he agreed to a referendum on the issue of using substantial taxpayer funds for a new stadium, regardless of where it was built. By allowing the taxpayers who would bear the financial burden of building the stadium to have some say on the matter, the mayor might have avoided the political fiasco of the Charter Revision Commission and, more important, gained more leverage to cut a reasonable deal with the Yankee owner. As precedent, there is the case of San Francisco: after a public referendum, in which the people of San Francisco turned down a proposal to offer heavy city subsidies to build a new stadium for the Giants baseball team, the owner of the team relented and agreed to come up with almost all the money for a more modest stadium.

But referendum or not, no mayor should allow the people of New York to believe that there will be a nickel's worth of economic benefit to the city in building a new stadium. Indeed, the mayor should be explaining that the price of any new New York stadium would include a 40 percent premium over the cost of one anywhere else in the country, because of the enormously high costs of doing business here, and that one of the principal causes of those high costs is a counterproductive tax system that includes such levies as the commercial rent tax.

Throughout the entire stadium imbroglio, Mayor Giuliani seems to have forgotten the central idea that has made his administration so successful and has helped capture the imagination of the country. The idea is that local government should focus its energies on the things it does best—for example, making the city safer and improving education—while cutting taxes and otherwise reducing the burden of government regulation on the local economy. That idea is still the best strategy for improving the lives of the people of Manhattan and the Bronx—whether either borough ends up having a major-league baseball stadium or not.

Mayor Giuliani is entitled to try to move the mountain a little to keep his beloved Yankees in the city. What he ought not to be doing in the process is to undermine his own political legacy and further impair the city's economic prospects.●

Research for this article was supported by the Brunie Fund for New York Journalism.

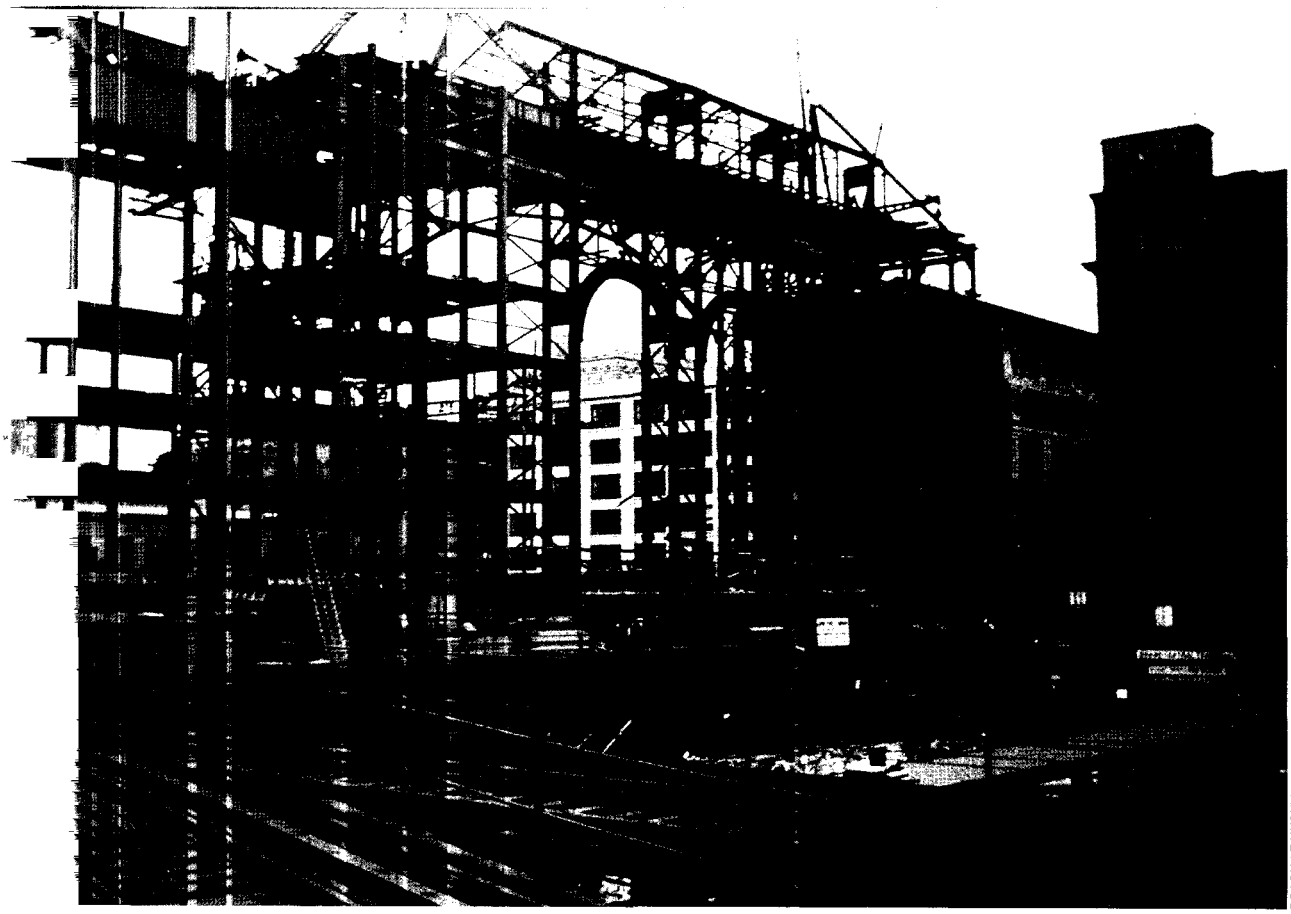
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Grand Again Grand Central

After a two-year, $197 million restoration, the 85-year-old terminal, deteriorating and billboard-defiled for so long, appears once more in its full splendor (above). In 1920 (below) it still stood magnificently alone.

TOP: ROBERT POLIDORI; LEFT: CULVER PICTURES INC.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



ARCHIVE PHOTOS

Even when skeletal, the grand windows are impressive, as the building takes shape in 1907.

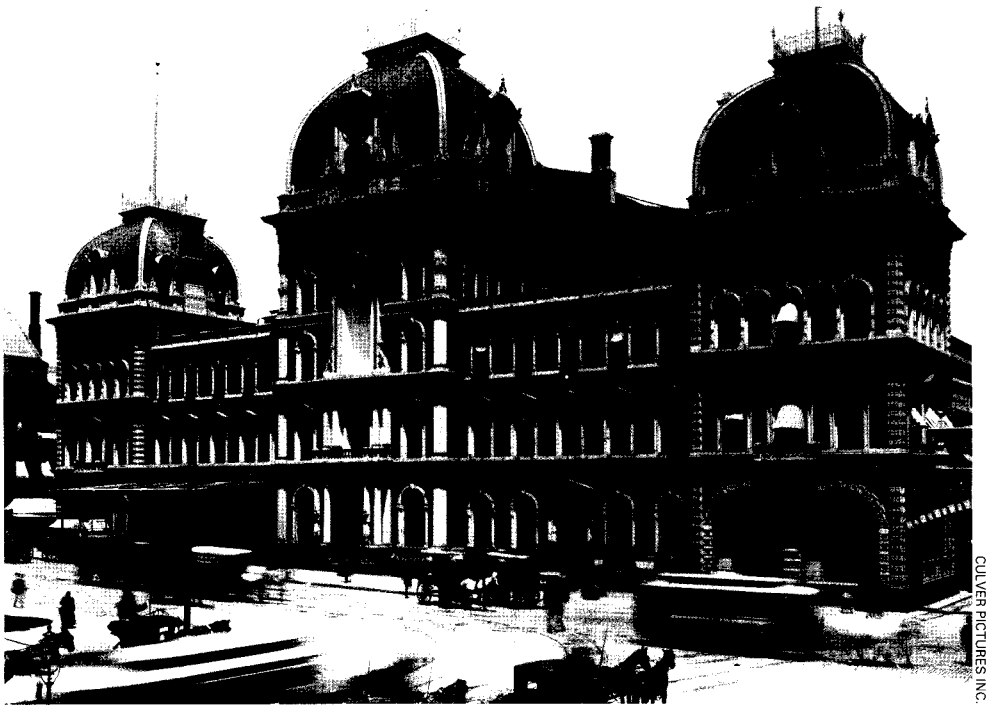
ARCHIVE PHOTOS

The epitome of modernity and efficiency in 1942 (above) and a temple of urbanity in 1925 (right)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



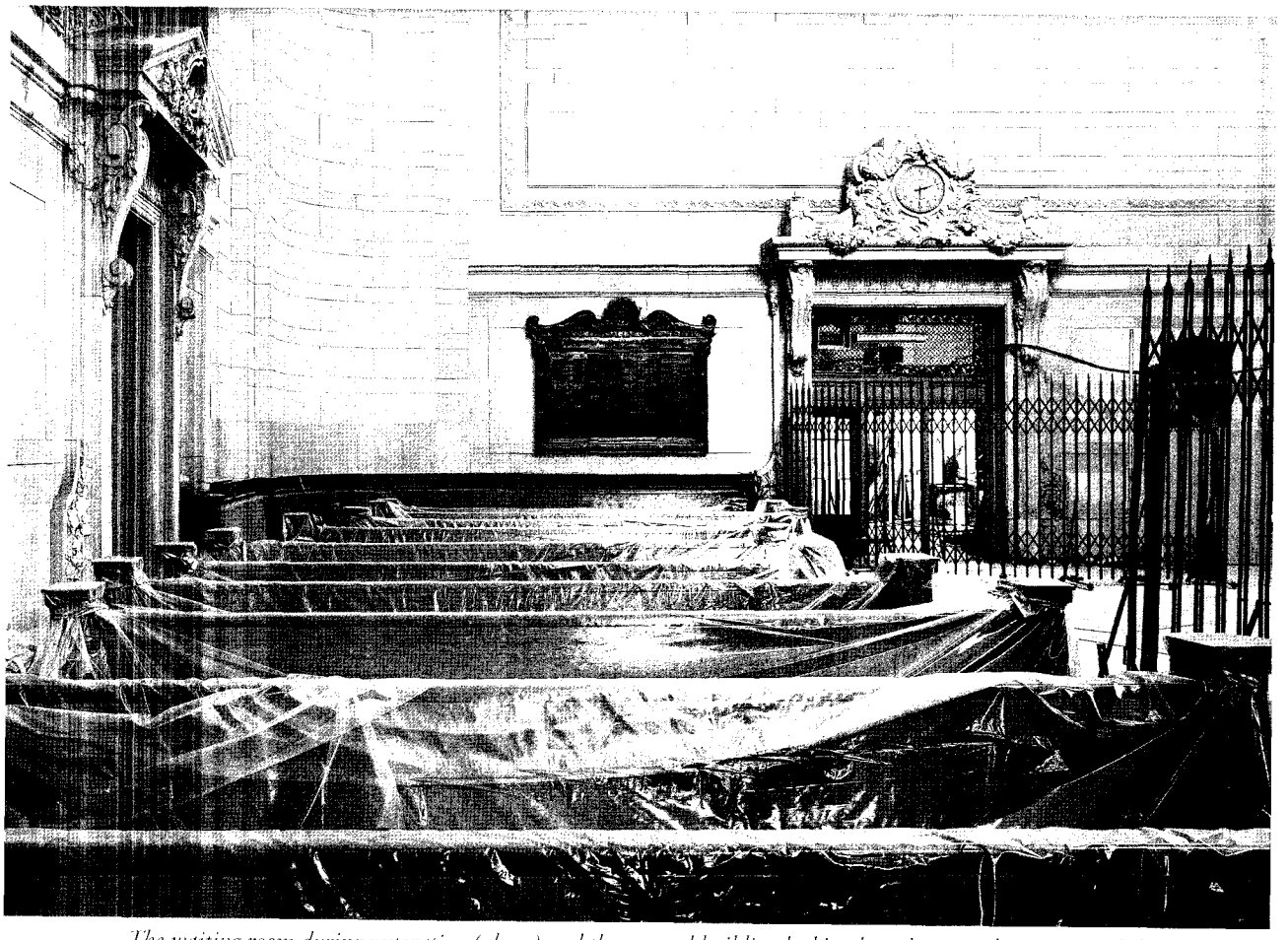
CULVER PICTURES INC.

CULVER PICTURES INC.

For a 1913 Beaux Arts building, Grand Central has a strikingly modern interior, as the light-suffused 1940 photo at the left shows. It is a far cry from its Victorian predecessor (top photo), though the 1890s' crowds (above) are as bustling and fashionable as those of a half century later.

CORBIS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



The waiting room during restoration (above) and the restored building looking brand new and sumptuous (below and right)

ROBERT POLIDORI (2)

ANDREW GARN

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Once We Knew How to Rescue Poor Kids

William J. Stern

Those who care about the fate of the underclass can learn much from the experience of New York's Irish in the second half of the nineteenth century. The nation's first underclass—criminal, drunken, promiscuous, and shiftless, with high illegitimacy rates and thousands of abandoned children—the Irish had so dramatically improved themselves as to enter the American mainstream triumphantly by the turn of the century. The Catholic Church, rather than any government effort, was the main agent of their reclamation, and no Catholic institution shows more clearly just how that transformation was achieved than New York's Society for the Protection of Destitute Catholic Children, which most called the Catholic Protectory. In June 1893, 30 years after the Protectory took in its first wayward child, a national conference on charity took the measure of its success. "What crimes have been prevented," the conference report declared, "what homes have been made happy, what human misery has been alleviated, what brands have been salvaged from the burning, what myriads of useful men and women have been made an honor to the state by this institution, it is beyond the power of the human pen to record."

The Protectory was the creation of a remarkable New Yorker-by-adoption named Dr. Levi Silliman Ives, whom no one could have foreseen would have fathered such a creation. But in hindsight, it's clear that several strands in his personal history went straight into the making of the Protectory.

First was Ives's own early poverty. Born a Connecticut Yankee in 1797 into a Presbyterian family whose ancestor had come ashore in Massachusetts Bay in 1635, he grew up dirt-poor in a bark shelter in West Turin, New York, where his failed-businessman father had moved the family. Ives, his parents, and some of his nine younger siblings worked as ill-paid hired hands in a sawmill. Perhaps the poverty grated all the more on Ives because his parents were related to a constellation of prosperous and well-known New England families; indeed, his Revolutionary War-hero uncle, down the road in West Turin, was a well-off farmer.

When Ives was 15, he enlisted in the War of 1812, in keeping with a family history of fierce American patriotism. After the war, he enrolled at Hamilton College in Clinton, New York, but in his third year, felled by a serious respiratory illness, he dropped out. In 1815, while he was still at Hamilton, his father, "melancholy from want of prosperity," according to a contemporary, drowned himself (though one wonders whether the melancholy was the effect or the cause of the penury). Poverty, war, illness, a father's failure and suicide—these were Ives's tumultuous formative experiences. After he left West Turin, escaping his past, he had no further contact with his family and never mentioned them in his published writings or even in his surviving correspondence.

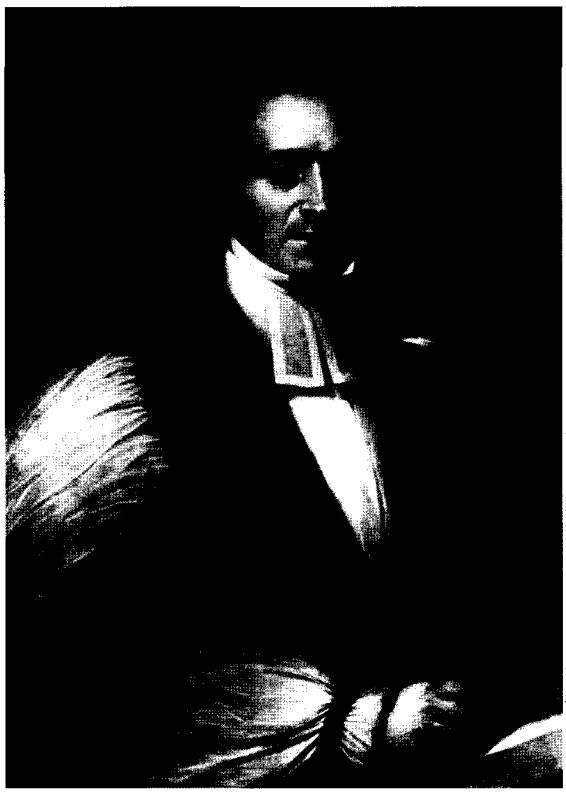
Ives's interest in religion kindled as he convalesced from illness; he soon took the first step in what would prove a long, restless spiritual quest. In this quest is visible the second of those character traits that led to the Protectory: the implacable intellectual honesty that led him to look closely at all available evidence and follow it to whatever conclusion it led.

While still in his teens, he took over a Presbyterian academy in Potsdam, New York, and gained a reputation as an electrifying revivalist preacher. But he had growing doubts about Presbyterianism, and, when he discovered the beauty of the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer and the writings of Episcopal bishop John Henry Hobart, rector of New York City's Trinity Church—America's biggest and richest parish—he wrote to him, confiding his doubts and asking for information about the Episcopal faith. The bishop invited him to New York, and, soon after, Ives entered Hobart's General Theological Seminary at Chelsea Square. Upon graduation in 1822, Ives became an Episcopal deacon and served in upstate New York and in Philadelphia.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

At the same time, he was courting Bishop Hobart's daughter, Rebecca, whom he married in 1825 and to whom he remained devoted his entire life. Two years later, he became rector of Saint Luke's Church in Greenwich Village, then still virtually suburban—and a long way from the bark shelter in West Turin. The congregation doubled during Ives's tenure and he turned down offers from bigger, more established parishes.

Tall, handsome, dedicated, and cerebral—a "practical ascetic," as his biographer John O'Grady rightly calls him—Ives was clearly a man on the rise in what was the religion of the American elites. In 1831, rising still further, he became Episcopal bishop of North Carolina.



SOUTHERN HISTORICAL COLLECTION/UNC, CHAPEL HILL

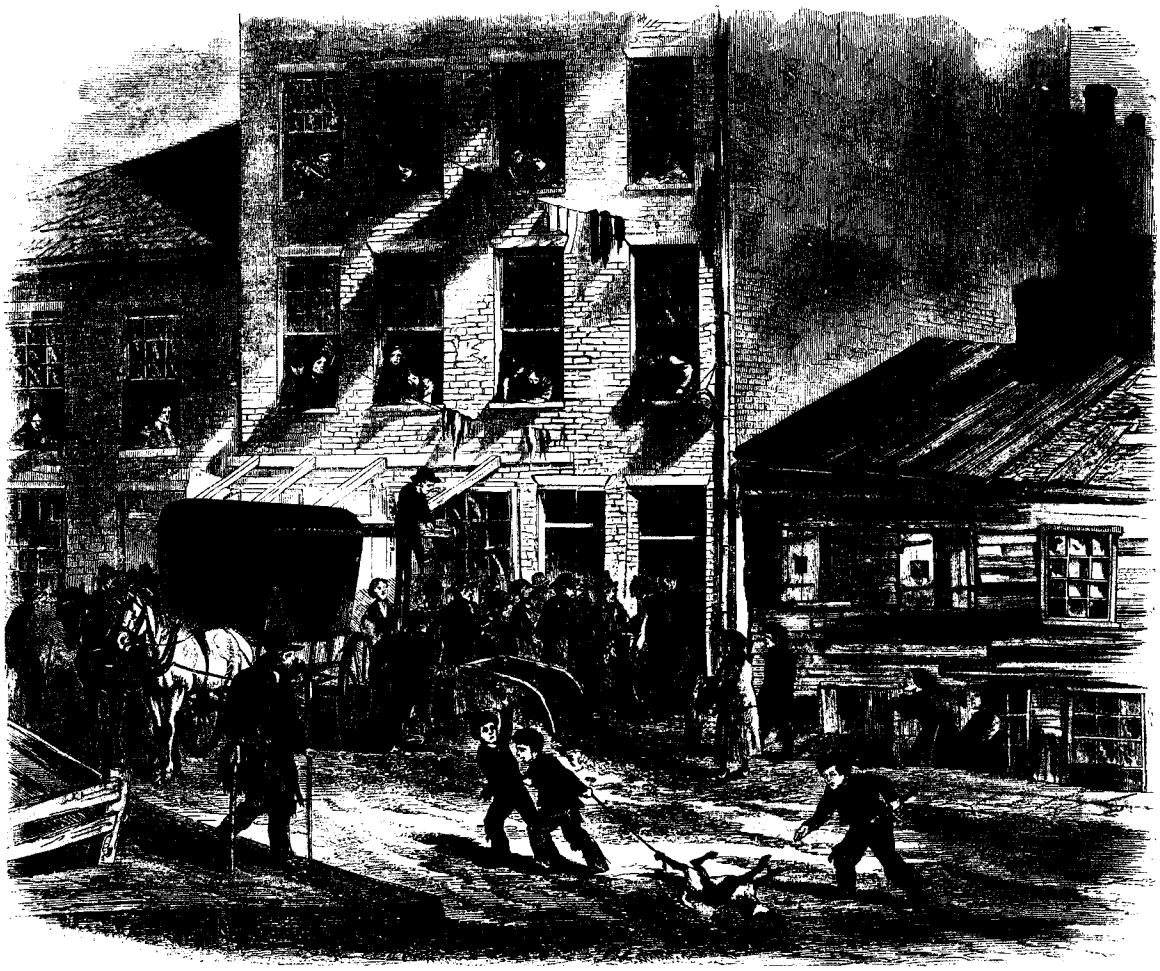
Levi Silliman Ives as bishop of North Carolina

It was among the destitute of that southern state that the last two personal qualities that bore fruit in the Protectory first blossomed: Ives's devotion to the poor and his talents as an institution builder. More missionary than theologian, he believed that to be truly Christian, one had to work directly with the poor—it was, he wrote, "what a man must do to be saved."

With its illness-breeding climate, North Carolina was a coarse and brutal place: public hangings provided a major source of popular entertainment. Among the state's illiterate, impoverished, and declining population, Ives found plenty of the poor to help. His chief rescue strategy was to found schools, as he would later do in founding the Protectory. In Raleigh, he established a school dedicated to providing faith-based values and a rigorous education to 100 or so students, most of them poor and ignorant boarders no older than 14—one of whom had traveled a month on horseback to attend the school from the banks of the Yazoo River in Mississippi. Educationally, the school was a great success, but financially, though its classes were filled to brimming, it failed, when the national economic crisis of 1837 dried up its funding. Even more ambitiously, with $400—much of it from New York friends—Ives bought an entire valley in the mountainous western part of North Carolina and set up a missionary school called Valle Crucis, modeled after an early Christian monastery and aimed at the poorest of the state's poor. But the money was too scant, and the wild mountain boys too unruly: this school failed, too. Ives learned from the failures that good intentions weren't sufficient for an institution to survive. You also had to pay attention to practical matters, such as raising money.

Ives's solicitude for the downtrodden extended to North Carolina's slaves. He was no abolitionist, but he worked to bring the Gospel both to slaves and to free blacks. He composed a catechism to use in teaching slaves, and he openly defended two plantation owners who had hired a full-time chaplain to teach their slaves religion. He encouraged plantation owners to treat their slaves well and to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



THE GRANGER COLLECTION

In the 1860s, 60,000 abandoned Irish children ran wild in New York slums like the Five Points (above).

worship with them, believing that, as Christianity changed the culture over time, slavery might wither away. One scholar, Michael Taylor, sums up Ives's attitude thus: help individual slaves, but say nothing about the institution of slavery. We might gloss it differently: like the founder of Christianity, Ives left political revolution to others. The revolution that interested him was in the mind and heart.

While Ives pursued his philanthropic projects in North Carolina, his questing intellectual spirit was working deep, as yet subterranean, changes in his religious life. As he had risen in the Episcopal hierarchy, the Oxford Movement within the Anglican Church had taken fire in England, and it included some of the most brilliant minds in England—most notably, of course, John Henry Newman, who, like several other prominent members, later converted to Catholicism. The movement looked to the early Christian experience to grasp the true meaning of Christianity, which included, the Oxford writers believed, a strong emphasis on pastoral and charitable work. (The movement formulated the 12-step program that Alcoholics Anonymous and almost all addiction treatment groups use today.) Bishop Hobart had introduced Ives to the Oxford Movement as early as the mid-1820s. Its influence had grown within Ives as he ministered to the poor in North Carolina, and it began to lead him, waveringly though inexorably, down Newman's path to Rome.

As he later explained in his spiritual autobiography, a strangely withholding memoir that gives little real insight into the man's private self, the Episcopal Church he knew didn't answer for him the overwhelming need—if one were truly to be Christian—to walk with the poor. "Your churches and houses, and sympathies and charities," Ives wrote, stating the Gospel message as he understood it, "will be thrown widely open to them." But in the Episcopal Church of his time, Ives felt he "could see nothing which marked it as the hope and the home of the wretched; nothing which proclaimed its

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

peculiar fellowship with the poor." Episcopal houses of worship, Ives thought, excluded the poor: "The very arrangement said aloud to the rich, 'sit thou here in a good place'; and to the poor, 'stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool.'" For Ives, who had known the humiliation of poverty, the Catholic Church satisfied his calling to help the destitute.

But imagine the painful dilemma he faced. Though conversion, he became convinced, offered him "peace of conscience, and the salvation of my soul," he later wrote, the idea of it filled him with "horror, . . . enhanced by the self-humiliation with which I saw such a step must cover me, the absolute deprivation of all mere temporal support which it must occasion, not only to myself, but to one whom I was bound 'to love and cherish until death.'" Ives indeed stood to lose the considerable worldly honor and eminence he had attained within the Episcopal Church. And Ives was right: what would it do to his wife? Her life had not been easy after she married him. The Iveses had lost both their young children to illness, a crushing blow. Rebecca Ives was frequently ill herself. She found the harshness of North Carolina and the distance from her family in New York hard to endure. And her father—Ives's great, almost fatherly, benefactor—was before his death in 1828 the very embodiment of American Episcopalianism. If Ives converted, wouldn't it betray Bishop Hobart's memory and force Rebecca to choose painfully between her husband and her late father?

But Ives always was faithful to the truth as he saw it—in all ways—however much pain and personal cost this might entail. Tormented, the 55-year-old cleric traveled to Rome in 1852 and became the first Protestant bishop since the Reformation to convert to Catholicism. Signaling Ives's prominence, it was Pope Pius IX who confirmed him into the Church the day after Christmas in 1852. A firestorm of controversy ensued, with the Protestant press and establishment denouncing Ives as mentally ill and bereft of integrity, and the Catholic press responding with a bizarre triumphalism, as though the Church had just won a high-profile sporting event. Ives's own brother came out against him and spoke, perhaps with their father's suicide in mind, of a family history of insanity.

When Ives returned from Rome in 1854, he settled in New York, which he had left 23 years earlier. No longer an exalted Episcopal bishop but now an ordinary Catholic layman, he would find his role ministering not to the city's elite, as he had from the pulpit of Saint Luke's, but to its most down-and-out denizens. The extraordinary archbishop of New York, "Dagger" John Hughes, ignoring the controversy that swirled around Ives, saw an imposing, learned man whose many talents he could use to help the Church. (See "How Dagger John Saved New York's Irish," Spring 1997.) Hughes at once put Ives to work teaching at Saint Joseph's Seminary, at the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Manhattanville, and at the Academy of Mount Saint Vincent in Westchester.

Hughes knew Ives would be an asset to the Church as an educator but soon learned that he would play an even more crucial role in the Church's charitable mission. Ives immediately joined the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul in Manhattanville and quickly became its New York leader. Formed in Paris during the 1830s as a Catholic response to socialist anticlericalism, class hatred, and political radicalism, the society took as its motto: go to the poor. It buried the dead, brought food, provided shelter, taught Sunday school, counseled alcoholics and troubled families, and cared for orphans, among many other intense, face-to-face ministrations to the poor.

New York City—and its Catholic Church—had no more pressing concern in the 1850s than to figure out what to do about the more than 60,000 abandoned, mostly illegitimate, Irish kids who roved the city in gangs with scary names like the Forty Thieves, the B'boys, and the Roach Gang, and terrorized citizens day and night. Thomas D'Arcy McGee, a tough Irish political exile, wanted to drum up opposition to the English among the New York Irish;

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

To give children the structure they needed, the Catholic Protectory's curriculum included dance, . . .

instead, he found himself more frightened of Irish teen thugs in New York City than he was of English soldiers in Ireland. Ives was acutely aware of the depraved condition of the Irish kids. Never, he remarked, had he witnessed "a more utter disregard of honor, of truth and purity and even the common decencies of life."

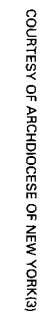
Where did they come from? For Archbishop Hughes, whose views Ives shared, they were the products of Irish family breakdown—a reminder that today's underclass had a precursor with remarkably similar traits. Trying to figure out how to save the children of this broken community, Ives began to study how various charities actually worked. He was a model social scientist, for—just as in his religious quest—he let the data lead him to the truth instead of conforming it to a predisposed vision.

Nothing seemed to work, he soon discovered. If the failed policies seem familiar, it's because the modern social services industry still trots them out. One idea was to change the kids' environment and give them jobs. The government sent wild Irish city kids to midwestern farms, assuming that Calvinist hard work—and maybe the fresh air—would reform them. Ives knew it was bunk: "[I]f you take a vicious child from the streets of the city and send him to the farms," he observed, "what you get is a vicious farm worker." After all, taking a kid out of the slums isn't really changing his environment, as partisans of the farmwork solution believed; the environment that really counts for delinquent kids, Ives understood, is in their minds and hearts.

The government also tried the foster-home solution. The Saint Vincent de Paul Society did this, too, so Ives saw how it worked up close. Over time, he grew skeptical. "I had been in the practice of securing good homes for untrained and destitute Catholic children," he later said, "and although I succeeded in finding places for many, I can call to mind only a single instance where the child did not either abscond or prove ungovernable and worthless." Since these kids were largely unsocialized—no one had ever imposed structure on their lives, taught them moral values, or shown them love—they tended to be too much to handle even for the most well-intentioned family. As psychiatrist George Hogben puts it, "Most functioning families will not be willing to establish the intense psychological structure and rigid discipline such children require."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

As Ives continued to search for an answer, he learned about the innovative charitable efforts of two East-Coast priests. Father George Haskins—like Ives, a former Episcopalian—ran a Catholic school in Boston that gave two years of intensive religious instruction to boys whom today we'd call "at risk." Haskins's school, Ives saw, had clearly improved the boys' behavior. In Baltimore, Father James Dolan tried something different. He stressed vocational training, but kept the boys in his home until they could support themselves. Here, too, Ives saw an improvement in the boys as they learned new skills. But both initiatives weren't by themselves enough, Ives believed. They needed to be combined.


COURTESY OF ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK(3)

Accordingly, Ives brought the Protectory into being, securing its charter from the State Legislature on April 14, 1863, and being elected president a few weeks later by an almost entirely Irish board of directors. The institution opened its doors in May 1863, in small rented quarters in two buildings on East 36th and 37th Streets. At first restricted to boys, the Protectory started its girls' division a few months later at the corner of 8th Street and Second Avenue. A little later, needing more room, the Protectory moved all its charges to two big rented buildings on 86th Street, near Fifth Avenue. The Christian Brothers, a lay group devoted to education, ran the boys' division; the Sisters of Charity, a religious order that looked after the sick and the destitute, took charge of the girls. In 1870, after Ives's death, the Protectory moved to a 114-acre site in Parkchester—then part of Westchester but now incorporated into the Bronx—that Ives had purchased in 1865. It operated there until it closed permanently in November 1938, when the city no longer had enough Catholic delinquents to fill it. Over the years, it sheltered more than 100,000 children, two-thirds of them boys.

In the Protectory's first annual report, Ives explained how it differed from other charities. It wanted to do something more for its charges, Ives suggested, "than merely rid the city of them, at great expense, for a few months, to return . . . or to become to some other place a more grievous charge than when they left." Instead, it sought to raise them from a state of "indolence, stupidity and vice" to one in which they would "acknowledge their obligation to God, to their parents and to society." It would "raise them from their state of degradation and misery and . . . place them in a condition in which they have a fair chance to work out for themselves a better destiny." Ives sought, in short, to re-socialize young ruffians. "Our great aim," he stressed, "is to mould their hearts to the practice of virtue, and while we make them worthy citizens of our glorious Republic, to render them fit candidates for the heavenly mansions above." He had his work cut out for him: because of tight financial realities, he could only take in kids the courts handed over, since he would get additional public funds for them—about $120 per kid per year of the roughly $350 per-kid cost. Thus, Ives had mostly juvenile delinquents—the roughest Irish youth—under the Protectory's wing.

The key to re-socializing the children, Ives believed, lay in giving them a faith-based system of values. "Every child committed to this institution," he proclaimed, "will be thoroughly trained in the faith and morality of the Gospel as revealed and entrusted to the Catholic Church." On first sight, this might look like boilerplate, without much meaning except to believers. But recall that religion has a centuries-old experience in effectively teaching people the difference between right and wrong, and that some of the most up-to-date social thinkers have rediscovered inner-city ministries as one of the most effective agencies for redeeming underclass kids today. It's easy enough to understand what these ministers are doing, and why Ives was successful, in modern, purely psychological terms. The Protectory provided the clearest possible statement of right and wrong, confidently asserted that these values were absolute and backed up by divine authority, provided a discipline of practice and reflection that reinforced these values, held out complete forgiveness for past wrongdoing, and offered membership in a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

. . . orchestra and band music, where everyone must play his part precisely, . . .

community organized around this code. Speaking more broadly still, Ives understood that at the center of the underclass condition is a moral and social void, and he knew how to fill it.

Respect was an essential component of the Protectory's moral lesson—respect for oneself, for parents, for other children, for teachers, and for God. Ives wanted to introduce the children to a world of obligations and make them aware that they weren't the sole arbiters of what they should and shouldn't do. He cultivated in them a host of ethical responsibilities where formerly there had been only caprice and impulse. Among other things, he made the Protectory children responsible for one another. "[I]t has occurred several times that a couple of our boys, having been sent on an errand to the city, have there fallen in with one who absconded, and have brought him back in triumph to the Protectory," Ives proudly observed.

One of the most effective disciplines the Protectory used to turn impulsive, often criminally inclined, children into personally responsible individuals was the sacrament of confession. Confession meant that each week the children had to examine their behavior, decide if it conformed to the ethical code they'd been taught, and take responsibility for it by confessing to a priest. Thus, they learned to reflect habitually on themselves and on morality, to lead an examined and responsible life.

The Protectory's Catholic teaching gave more than a stern set of dos and don'ts to these emotionally shipwrecked children. It offered them love and a sense of their own worthiness. If you keep the commandments, Ives's teachers told the children, God would be father and friend, offering an infinite and unshakable love. For children who had never known a parent's tender care, this was strong solace. The sacrament of the Eucharist had an equally positive psychological resonance for Protectory dependents, dramatizing to them that an all-powerful God had been willing to sacrifice his own son for their sake—that's how much they were worth. This teaching conveyed a powerful message of self-esteem, to use today's debased term.

Ives aimed to give the Protectory's children the means of making a living. He "resolved to cause these children . . . to be trained in some industrial occupation or mechanic art while they are

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

instructed in all the essential branches of an English education." Vocational training also had a moral purpose, Ives believed, for it "diverts young minds from the evil suggestions of the tempter." "In the workshop," he added, "we have found the most direct and effectual corrective for an idle, vicious boy." As early as 1868, the Protectory had trained 185 boys as shoemakers, 45 as gardeners, and a half-dozen as bakers; 56 girls had learned how to make dresses. Twenty years later the Protectory had added stereotyping, blacksmithing, carpentry, tailoring, and other trades to its curriculum. By the turn of the century, the Protectory even trained many of its charges in electrical engineering, masonry, and plumbing. Ives was not turning out ditchdiggers.

Ives believed that classical and sacred music were crucial to a complete education. He launched a full brass band and a string orchestra at the Protectory. Playing in a band or orchestra taught kids how to play their parts exactly in a disciplined communal activity to which they were essential. Beyond that, the message of serious music is order, harmony, and transcendence, all in tune with the Protectory's teachings.

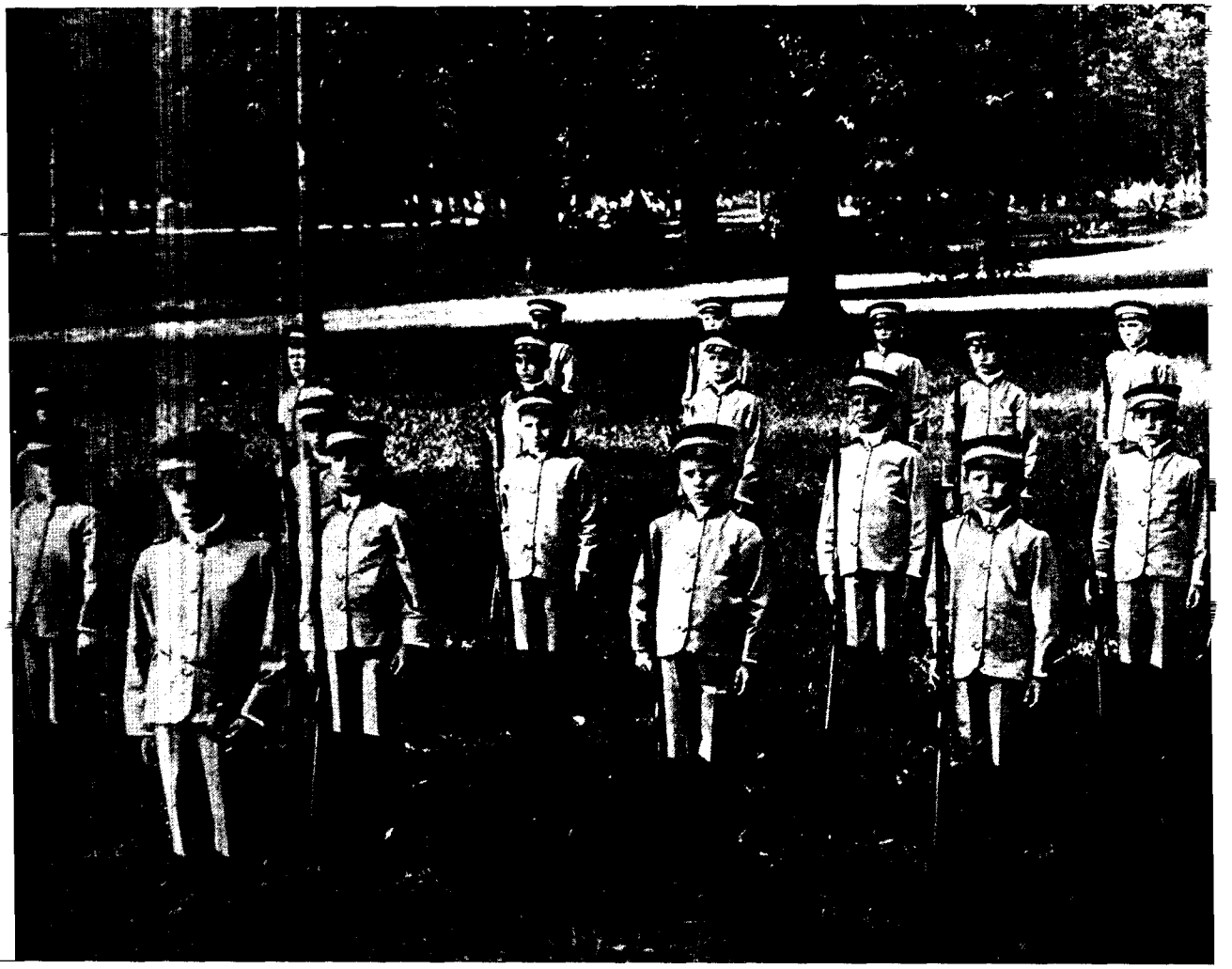
The inner and outer worlds of abandoned children are chaotic—to them, frighteningly so—and Ives understood those kids' special need for rigid structure, to provide them with a sense that the world is secure and predictable and to bring some order to their emotional lives. Everything at the Protectory took place according to an almost military schedule, providing the all-encompassing, minute-by-minute structure whose lack, as Ives perhaps intuited, is the reason even good foster care so often fails. The weekday began at 5:30 and provided slots for chapel and prayer, for meals, for classes and study periods, for shopwork or groundskeeping, for recess and even a little evening recreation time, and for lots of regimented, military-style drill for the boys and highly structured group dance routines for the girls. During the weekend, the kids had religious instruction and music. These wayward children, who once had time hanging heavy on their hands, now used almost every waking minute for self-improvement.

In sum, Ives sought a total inner transformation of the Protectory's wards. He wanted to educate them, give them useful skills, and, most of all, change their values and worldview. A practical man, he wasn't preparing children for the monastic life; he wanted them to be "worthy, influential and prosperous" in an America he described as "unsettled and money making"—not a bad description of present-day America. He wanted to instill in them the hope that, through hard work, they might support themselves and a family and even become wealthy.

Did Ives succeed? Did his Irish charges become self-reliant? According to historian George Paul Jacoby, the answer is an unambiguous yes. Boys found jobs when they left the Protectory, and, Jacoby observes, "many soon became very prosperous in the trades for which they were trained." In the single year of 1876, Jacoby records, the Protectory found positions for 186 children throughout New York, and in almost every case, "the result was gratifying." Some of the kids even went on to study the classics at university—a remarkable fact, given that the vast majority of them were more or less illiterate when they first came to the Protectory.

Outsiders who evaluated the Protectory were warm in their approval. In 1878, Elisha H. Harris of the U.S. Health Department praised the institution for cultivating in the children "obedience, order, cleanliness, and diligence," and, above all, "a reverence for their Creator and his divine behests." An 1893 National Conference on Charity and Correction viewed the Protectory as a model philanthropic enterprise: "He who visiting the Protectory on one of its holidays, notes the many gymnastic exercises or the splendid military drill through which the boys are put; their graceful delivery in the recitation of pieces; the sweet songs they sing, and the superb band of 75 pieces that discourses music more like professionals

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



. . . and military-style drill, with its emphasis on order.

than amateurs; observes the boys in the base-ball field; looks into the work done by boys and girls in the classroom; or he who visits the workshops of the boys, and the serving-rooms of the girls, when in full operation, notes the industry and taste with which they perform their various duties—such a one can form some conception of the good that is accomplished by both departments of this institution." The conference pointed to other evidence in making its case, including enthusiastic endorsements from philanthropist William F. Barnard of the Five Points House of Industry in 1878 and from a state committee on the causes of crime in 1882.

Another testament to the Protectory's success is the quality of the goods its workshops produced. The Protectory's shoes, dresses, and other products drew high praise, even from across the ocean. Leading London papers, including the *Times*, the *Standard*, and the *Globe*, as well as Dublin's *Freeman*, dispensed such praise as: "The women's shoes are of the very neatest, most finely finished, and of the best make," or "the handiwork shown is of a remarkably high order," or yet again, "these specimens of work are really startling, and go to show what may be done with the classes of youth which in earlier years have had but few, if any, opportunities for development or self-help." Skilled craftsmen are rare and the product of much cultivation, and to get such high-quality work—the kind of work that mobilizes so many human potentialities—from this human material is a sure sign that Ives's grand project was doing something profoundly right.

Additional evidence for the Protectory's success comes from the often moving testimonies from former charges that appear in the *Protectory News*, a literate and chatty newsletter the institution began to publish in 1910. One issue from the World War I period closed with a story of a former pupil, Edward Farley, now a soldier, who had promised his

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

devout mother that he would wear a ribbon on his arm until he had stained his soul with mortal sin. As he lay dying from wounds received in battle, Farley told the chaplain attending to him to make sure his mother knew that he had worn the ribbon right up to the moment he died.

A 1910 issue of the *News* offered this success story: "After 44 years," wrote Peter M. Gillen, "I can never forget you and your kindness to me and your untiring efforts to instill in me the necessary education. I became . . . a first-class book and newspaper compositor and for more than 20 years held the post of proof reader on the *World*, *Herald*, and *Tribune*. I have been married 34 years, having had 12 children. . . . Two of my children are musicians (pianists) in great demand and who earn good money."

The editor praises another letter, from Archie Reilly, for its absence of all "etymological and syntactical errors." Reilly writes: "Mr. Deery is a very nice gentleman and is affording me every opportunity of learning the business of wholesale Quarry agents. I am also studying shorthand and am quite sure I shall succeed in learning it thoroughly. I find myself getting along nicely and have splendid hopes that with the blessing of God, perseverance and an abundance of energy, I may have a bright future." Reilly couldn't have offered a more fitting restatement of Ives's hopes in founding the Catholic Protectory.

Ives's influence spread. In Baltimore, Archbishop Spalding modeled the Saint Mary's Industrial School after the Protectory, and schools soon opened in California, Illinois, Kentucky, and Missouri that looked to it as a major influence. Parochial schools nationwide embraced Ives's approach, and Ives himself traveled the country evangelizing for his ideas on charity. In his last years, which he spent at Saint Joseph's Cottage on 138th Street near Broadway, Ives received a multitude of visitors from across the country, who sought his advice on how to establish and run charitable organizations. He died on October 14, 1867, just after his friends lifted up his head so that he could look one last time at Domenichino's sublime painting *The Last Communion of Saint Jerome*. Fittingly, he was buried on the grounds of the Catholic Protectory. The poet John Savage summed up Ives's dedication to New York's Irish poor: "His tender sympathies, and the necessities so sadly prominent in a great city, naturally led him to good works."

His example sheds light on the quiet struggle that has recently broken out for the soul of Catholic Charities, the $2.25 billion social services behemoth of which Ives was a founder. On one side, the organization's leadership echoes the social services industry's party line. Typical is the complaint of president Fred Kammer, a Jesuit, that the welfare-reform debate a couple of years ago had "focused almost exclusively on personal responsibility" and had ignored "the right to suitable employment and just and adequate wages." On the other side, critics like Senator Rick Santorum object that, if Catholic Charities is "only going to be a more efficient bureaucracy, if [it is] not going to feed the souls as well as the stomach, then why exist?" Santorum and his allies reflect the guiding spirit Ives brought to Catholic Charities a century ago. The fact that Ives's approach worked so well powerfully argues in favor of the Santorum point of view.

Today, as Catholic Charities USA—the central office—pursues the expansion of the welfare state, there's less and less religion in its mission and less and less understanding of Ives's central insight that for charity to succeed, it must change the cultural attitudes of its recipients. It's a pity, since the welfare state can't solve the social problems—from illegitimacy to drug addiction—that we face at the end of the twentieth century. Certainly, Catholic Charities would be immeasurably more a force for good if it rediscovered the wisdom of Levi Silliman Ives. And our entire national effort to help the underclass would benefit immeasurably from reflecting on his example of changing the inner culture of the poor, too. •

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Who in the World Was Fred F. French?

James Morrison

I turned the page in Don DeLillo's new ten-ton novel, *Underworld*, and right there, smack in the middle of the book, a character named Rochelle asks, "Who in the world was Fred F. French?" She is standing in the polished art-deco lobby of a Fifth Avenue skyscraper named the Fred F. French Building. I wanted to grab the shoulders of Rochelle or Don DeLillo and answer that, not only do I know who Fred F. French was but that I saw the man himself in Pawling, New York, while making house calls with my father.

It was during FDR's first term. I was waiting in our Studebaker parked in front of French's country house, a handsome, new, red brick Georgian building of agreeable proportions, surrounded by recently transplanted shrubs and a huge elm tree, also newly transplanted and held upright by guy wires staked to the ground.

Father came out of the front door carrying his black medical bag, and walking alongside him was Fred F. French. They were both bald, bespectacled, bow tied, and in shirtsleeves, chatting amiably. I remember how much they looked alike, and how surprised I was that the mythic Fred F. French appeared very much the everyday human being.

But Fred French was not an everyday human being. He rose heroically from dire poverty to become a self-made real estate tycoon. Born in Manhattan in 1883, he was the eldest of four, whose father, a cigar maker, died when Fred was a child. To help keep the family together in their tiny house in the Bronx, where they had moved, the boy peddled papers, washed windows, and mowed lawns. But Mother French was a strong, willful woman, and a graduate of the University of Michigan. She insisted her son get an education. He won a Pulitzer scholarship, ensuring him of four years of high school, and eventually, after a year at Princeton and a spell out west, he took an engineering course at Columbia. Thereafter, in a series of what we would now call "temp jobs," his salary rose from $5 to $18 a week, and when the last one expired, in 1907, he found himself sitting in City Hall Park, broke, tired, and hungry.

NEW YORK TIMES PICTURES

Fred F. French (above) and his eponymous Fifth Avenue skyscraper (right)

"The only person in the world I could think of to ask for aid," he recalled, "was Andrew W. Edson of the Board of Education." Edson had offices on 59th Street, so Fred French set out walking the five miles straight up Broadway from City Hall to Columbus Circle, caught Edson coming out of his office, went up to the man and said, "Mr. Edson, may I borrow $500?" Edson asked, "What security do you have?" to which French replied briskly, "Nothing but my personal note." Edson was about to write out a check when the audacious French said, "And pardon me, Mr. Edson, but could I have $10 of that in cash?" The man peeled off a ten spot, wrote a check for $490, and Fred French was on his way. He spent the $10—all of it—on "one glorious meal" at the Savoy Hotel.

His first move as a real estate wheeler-dealer was to buy the Bronx house where he lived. By leveraging it, he raised the capital to put up a small building in the Bronx, which he sold at a profit. That, along with his hands-on learning as a building-construction superintendent, emboldened the energetic youth and led to his formation of the Fred F. French Companies, developers of Manhattan real estate. "You can't overbuild in New York,"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK (3)

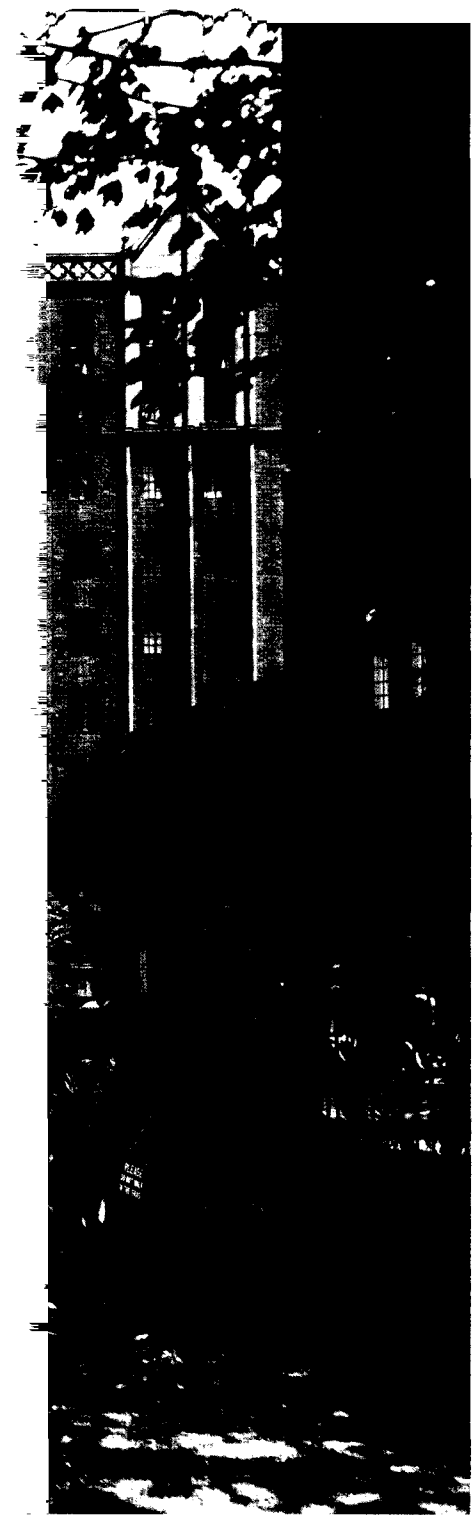
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

French's Tudor City was mid-Manhattan's biggest apartment complex in 1925.

was the phrase he used to clinch many a deal.

The system that brought French success—he called it the French Plan—was to repay investors their original investment plus a 6 percent dividend before taking any profits for the French company. This was the financing principle in play when he announced his intention, in 1925, to build Tudor City—at that time, the largest housing development ever undertaken in mid-Manhattan—at the east end of 42nd Street, then crowded with slaughterhouses and tene-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



ments. He was content, he said, with a small profit margin on a large business. The French Plan also financed that spectacular art-deco skyscraper on Fifth Avenue. But Knickerbocker Village downtown, a massive, low-income, 1,600-apartment complex between the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges, had been financed by a loan from FDR's Reconstruction Finance Corporation, as one of the nation's first publicly subsidized urban-redevelopment projects. If Fred French was a first-rate builder, he was, alas, a third-rate landlord in this project, because on the day his eager new tenants moved into their new Knickerbocker digs, they found conditions unlivable. A study by Fordham professor Mark Naison describes how the ensuing confrontation between the stonewalling Fred French Management and the Knickerbocker tenants led to the rent-control laws that, greatly to New York's disadvantage, have lasted to this day.

New Yorkers knew Fred F. French as a tough landlord, but that's not how we knew him in our small town. Though our neighbors and townspeople never saw him, his Ozymandian outrages were much discussed in the downtown barbershop, pool hall, firehouse, and saloons. So it was little wonder a nine-year-old kid would clearly remember his first sighting of Fred F. French.

He had arrived in town during the craw of the depression, a time when hobo camps multiplied alongside the tracks at Libby's Crossing, and when it was common to have our mealtimes interrupted by transients begging at the back door for food scraps. Yet at this desperate time, French was buying up fields, meadows, woodlots, streams, and whole farms on Quaker Hill. Eventually, his holdings were counted in miles rather than acres.

Town folk would watch the doings of Fred F. French with a mixture of wonder and dismay. He'd tear down homesteads that had been the family home to several generations. He planted trees. My God, did he plant trees! As kids on the way to school, we'd watch full-grown trees from a Westchester nursery dragged up on flatbed trucks to transplant beside his mansion on the hill—one elm so large that its burlap-wrapped roots were on one flatbed, and the body of the tree rested on a second flatbed truck driving backward all the way from Scarsdale.

It was a time of the Civilian Conservation Corps, a New Deal program intended to keep unemployed youth off the streets while reforesting the countryside, and Fred F. French took full advantage of it. Some said 60,000 evergreen seedlings went into his fields during one summer. Around town, people said that Fred F. French built his house so that he could sit on his front porch and look from horizon to horizon and say to himself, "It's all mine." And he did, and he could.

In addition to farms and homesteads, he bought up, fenced in, gated, and posted the mile-long pristine lake where we locals used to swim, fish, and picnic. He even tried to buy the country

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

road running alongside his lake, but the town wouldn't sell, so, overnight, signs appeared along the road saying PRIVATE! and warning trespassers of severe consequences if they strayed over to the lake. He rebuilt his boathouse and bathhouse to give each of the French children a private changing room. The door of each room bore a sign proclaiming its owner's best school subject: one sign read "Geometry II," another "Latin," and so on.

The boathouse sheltered an array of water-sports equipment and half a dozen brand-new Adirondack rowboats bearing the engraved emblem of Abercrombie & Fitch. The boats were round-bottomed, of remarkable craftsmanship, made of layered bent wood, shellacked to a high gloss, and fitted with bronze oarlocks and basket-weave seats. Fred F. French forbade motorboats on his lake, a rule that holds to this day.

The memory of the Lindbergh kidnapping was still fresh, and French hired a bodyguard to look after the four French youngsters, three boys and a girl. The guard was said to be an ex–New York City detective and was a familiar figure in town, dressed in a dark suit, driving a shiny black Ford four-door V8. It was the car he'd use to drop off the three French boys at the nearby private boarding school where they were day students.

Fred F. French Jr. was the youngest and a schoolmate of my elder brother. His father, fearing that the frail youngster was lacking in bravado, required that the school provide the boy with boxing lessons. There was talk around our dinner table about a natural history museum that the French boys maintained in an upper story of their house. Word filtered down to the village that the whole family would set out into the fields and swamps with nets and jars to catch bugs, beetles, and butterflies, and then classify and mount them in glass cases for display.

The villager view of those who lived in the house on the hill was that they were eccentrics, with an almost Teddy Rooseveltian preoccupation with self-improvement. French, like TR before him, had spent a year of his youth as a western cowboy, named his first son Theodore, and loved being immersed in big dirt-moving projects. There the likeness ended. He was an intensely private person. From our distance, Fred F. French was a father doting in splendid isolation.

For a few months one fall, the bodyguard brought Ellen French to the public school, where she sat beside me in Miss Giberson's fifth-grade classroom. I remember taking pity on the delicate, shy, and withdrawn little girl suddenly finding herself in the midst of rough and rowdy townies. At one point, I leaned across the aisle and whispered what I thought were words of comfort. I said, "You know, Ellen, your father is very rich."

Then very early one morning in 1936, the phone rang in our house. Mrs. French was on the line asking Father to come quickly, because Mr. French wouldn't wake up. Fred F. French died in his sleep at age 54.

Mrs. French, the three boys, and Ellen moved away and were seldom heard from again. The house stood empty for a year, as various predatory speculators circled the estate. After all, the lakefront, subdivided into a thousand waterfront lots, offered irresistible fast-buck potential. But finding the combination that would separate that lake from the rest of the holding proved difficult, giving time for a white knight to gather the resources to preserve the vast French holdings.

The white knight turned out to be one of the most public and outgoing people of his day, Lowell Thomas—newscaster, adventurer, movie mogul. Thomas as a cub reporter in World War I discovered Lawrence of Arabia. And the once very private home of the reclusive Fred F. French became a destination for presidents and princes as well as for the many friends of the gregarious Thomas.

As for Fred French's New York City monuments? They still stand proud: the Fred F. French Building, designated a National Landmark; Tudor City, more than ever a prime midtown address; Knickerbocker Village, tucked at river's edge on Manhattan, overlooking the Gothic splendor of the Brooklyn Bridge.

Knickerbocker Village

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Oh, to be England

Uncouth Chic

Theodore Dalrymple

Last June in Paris, a young Englishman walked into a bar frequented by Britons, having agreed to meet his girlfriend there. A row had been brewing between them all day, and he asked her to leave with him. She was enjoying herself, however, and demurred; whereupon he dragged her into the adjoining room, punched her to the ground, and kicked her so viciously that he left her head and stomach covered in bruises. The bar staff pulled him off and threw him out, but not before he had received a *Glasgow kiss*—a head-butt—from a chivalrous patron of the bar.

Only two months earlier, a court had acquitted the young Englishman of an assault on his previous girlfriend, the mother of his two-year-old child. The pair had quarreled over access to the child, and the woman alleged that, as his clinching argument, he had beaten her. On learning of his lucky and probably undeserved acquittal, his new girlfriend—the one he assaulted in Paris—said, "For any dad, what [he] has gone through is a nightmare, but the case won't affect our relationship." (Presumably, as the mother of a three-year-old by a previous liaison, she had special insight into the parental heart.) But when his former girlfriend, the mother of his child, heard about the assault on her successor in Paris, she was less sentimental. "Frankly," she said, "I am not surprised that someone [else] has found themselves on the receiving end of something like this."

When the young Englishman had had time to reflect on the incident, he said, "I totally regret everything that happened"—as if what had happened were a typhoon somewhere in the East Indies, over which he could have been expected to exert no influence.

REUTERS/REBECCA NADEN/ARCHIVE PHOTOS

Prime Minister Blair beams at rock star Noel Gallagher and wife.

Apart from its Parisian setting, every aspect of the story seems familiar to the student of English underclass life: the easily inflamed ego, the quick loss of temper, the violence, the scattering of illegitimate children, the self-exculpation by use of impersonal language But the young Englishman was not a member of the underclass, nor was the woman he assaulted. His salary alone was $1.25 million a year, and she was a well-known weather-girl-turned-talk-show-host Poverty was not the explanation of their behavior.

The young Englishman was a famous professional soccer player. True, soccer players are usually drawn from the class adjacent to the underclass, into which downward slippage is all too easy. But in the past, those who managed to escape their

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lowly origins usually aspired to be taken for *bona fide* members of the middle or upper classes by conforming their conduct to middle-class standards.

The young soccer player felt no such impulse: and why should he have, when his public behavior resulted neither in legal sanction, social ostracism, or even strong disapproval? For the truth is that in modern Britain, the direction of cultural aspiration has reversed: for the first time in history, it is the middle and upper classes that aspire to be taken for their social inferiors, an aspiration that (in their opinion) necessitates misconduct. No wonder, therefore, that the young soccer player didn't feel that his new-found wealth imposed any obligation upon him to change his ways.

The signs—both large and small—of the reversal in the flow of aspiration are everywhere. Recently, a member of the royal family, a granddaughter of the queen, had a metal stud inserted into her tongue and proudly displayed it to the press. Such body piercing began as a strictly underclass fashion, though it has spread widely to the popular culture industry—into a branch of which, of course, the monarchy is fast being transformed.

Middle-class girls now consider it chic to sport a tattoo—another underclass fashion, as a visit to any British prison will swiftly establish. The idea that a girl should have herself tattooed would have horrified the middle classes as recently as ten years ago. But young middle-class women now proudly wear tattoos as badges of antinomian defiance, of intellectual independence, and of identification with the supposedly downtrodden—if not of the entire world, then at least of our inner cities.

Advertising now glamorizes the underclass way of life and its attitude toward the world. Stella Tennant, one of Britain's most famous models and herself of aristocratic birth, has adopted almost as a trademark the stance and facial expression of general dumb hostility to everything and everybody that is characteristic of so many of my underclass patients. A recent advertisement for a brand of casual shirt featured a snarling young man demanding to know, *What you looking at?*—precisely the words that spark so many knife-fights between young underclass men of exquisitely tender ego. A new style has been invented: uncouth chic.

Diction in Britain has always been an important marker, to some extent even a determinant, of a person's place in the social hierarchy. Whether this is a healthy phenomenon may be debated, but it is an indisputable fact. Even today, social psychologists find that the British almost universally associate what is known as *received pronunciation* with high intelligence, good education, and a cultured way of life. Rightly or wrongly, they see it as a marker of self-confidence, wealth, honesty, even cleanliness. Regional accents are generally held to signify the opposite qualities, even by people who speak with them.

So it is a development worthy of remark that, for the first time in our modern history, people who would, by upbringing, use received pronunciation as a matter of course, now seek to suppress it. In other words, they are anxious not to appear intelligent, well educated, and cultured to their fellow countrymen, as if such attributes were in some way shameful or disadvantageous. Where once the aspiring might have aped the diction of their social superiors, the upper classes now ape the diction of their inferiors. Those who send their children to expensive private schools, for example, now regularly report that they emerge with diction and vocabulary little different from the argot of the local state school.

The BBC, which until a few years ago insisted with very few exceptions on received pronunciation by its announcers, is now falling over itself to ensure that the speech that comes over the airwaves is demographically representative. The political ideology underlying the decision to make this change is a crude and simple one, a hangover from Marxism: that the upper and middle classes are bad; that what has traditionally been regarded as high culture is but a fig leaf for middle- and upper-class oppression of the working class; and that the working class is the only class

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

whose diction, culture, manners, and tastes are genuine and authentic, valued for their own sake rather than as a means to maintain social hierarchy. Communist utopianism may be dead in Russia, but it molders on at the BBC—exclusively among people of the upper and middle classes, of course.

Symbolic of the sea change in the direction of cultural influence brought about by liberal middle-class self-hatred is the contrast between two recent prime ministers, Mrs. Thatcher and Mr. Blair. Mrs. Thatcher, of lowly origin, taught herself to speak like a grandee; Mr. Blair, nearer to the grandee class by birth, now toys (not altogether convincingly) with the glottal stop and other vocal mannerisms of the lower classes, such as the short *a* in words like *class* and *pass*. And the only clubs of which Mr. Blair admits membership in his entry in *Who's Who* are the Trimdon Colliery and Deaf Hill Working Men's Club and the Fishburn Working Men's Club. Indeed, the most exclusive social organization to which any of his cabinet admits membership in *Who's Who* is the Covent Garden Community Centre. Otherwise, the cabinet appears to confine its socializing to the Jewel Miners' Welfare Club and the Newcraighall Miners' Welfare Club: a curious phenomenon for a group of people distinguished chiefly for their wealth.

After his election, Mr. Blair lost little time in establishing that his tastes were thoroughly demotic, contrary to the impression created by the recent sale of his house for $1 million. He invited one of the Gallagher brothers, of the pop group Oasis, to his first party at Downing Street, seemingly as a matter of national urgency.

The Gallagher brothers are notorious for their crudity. Their antics might be a mere publicity stunt, of course, and it is possible that in private they are charm itself, but it was as a public figure that one of them was invited to Downing Street. I saw their act for myself when a newspaper asked me to attend one of their concerts, an event I would otherwise have been at some pains to avoid. Nine thousand young fans (at $30 a ticket) crowded into an exhibition hall; they were mainly people at the lower end of the social and educational spectrum. The group's publicity agents gave me earplugs, surely a strange way of currying favor for a musical act. Not that there was any danger that I wouldn't be able to hear it: for despite the plugs, the sound waves were so strong that I felt a vibration in my throat, detectable even with my hand.

The Gallaghers dressed exactly as the underclass dresses; their mannerisms were precisely those of my underclass patients. Between songs, one of them spoke a few words, among which *fuck* and its various derivatives were frequent, uttered not so much to convey a meaning as a general mood of egotistical defiance. About halfway through the concert, one of the brothers asked the audience, "Any of you fuckers out there got any fucking drugs?"

His attitude of untouchable snarling insolence was not lost on his audience, of course; and neither will have been its effective endorsement by the prime minister's invitation. What is the point of restraint and circumspection, if such stream-of-consciousness vulgarity can win not merely wealth and fame but complete social acceptance? For the hundreds of thousands of young men and women who have been to Oasis concerts, what is good enough for the Gallaghers and the prime minister will be good enough for them.

By so ostentatiously inviting one of the Gallaghers, the prime minister also endorsed a belief about music that is now general in England: that there is no better and no worse, only popular and unpopular. Difference is held to inhere not in the quality of the music but in the size and social composition of the audience: so that the easy and the popular that might once have been considered worse is now considered not merely equal but better. Even people one might have expected to defend high culture have surrendered abjectly to populism—indeed, have fanned its flames with multicultural fervor. I recently heard an Oxford classics don aver that in point of quality, there was nothing to choose between Mozart and the productions of the latest rap group

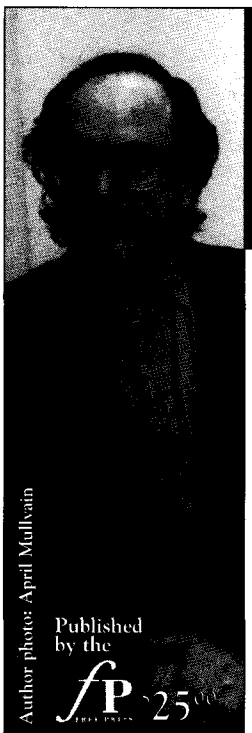
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(though I wouldn't mind betting what his deeply held preferences were, under all the posturing and bad faith). When anyone mentions great songwriters, it is now obligatory to bracket the Beatles with Schubert to establish one's broad-minded, democratic *bona fides*; and the Midland Bank has just withdrawn its subsidy of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden—on the grounds that opera is a minority interest—and will now give the money to a pop festival instead. Patronage of the arts, therefore, has become mere polling and pandering.

Even in behavior, the new orthodoxy for all classes is that, since nothing is better and nothing is worse, the worse is better because it is more demotic. Everyone knows that British soccer crowds are the worst-behaved in Europe, if not the world. But what is less well known is that these crowds are not made up solely, or even mainly, of people at the bottom of the social ladder—and, in fact, solid middle-class citizens perpetrate much of the worst behavior. What was once a proletarian entertainment is now distinctly bourgeois, and far from having improved the conduct at matches, the change in the social composition of the audience has caused a deterioration.

I saw this for myself in Rome, where I went to report for a newspaper on British soccer hooliganism at a match between Italy and England. For the duration of the English invasion, Rome had the atmosphere of a city under siege (though the barbarians were truly within the gates). Thousands of police were on duty throughout the city, to prevent the drunken riot and looting to which an English crowd, left to its own devices, now almost always degenerates.

At the match itself, in the Olympic Stadium, the English crowd behaved with typical unpleasantness. For about three hours—before, during, and after the game—it hurled insults in unison at the Italian crowd. It chanted, *Who the fuck do you think you are?* and *You're shit and you know you are,* with scarcely a break. As far as I could tell, I was the only person in the English section of the stadium who did not join in. It was precisely for this that the thousands had come to Rome. Even worse, this mob of free-born Englishmen accompanied the chanting by what looked unconscionably like the fascist salute—



FROM THE AUTHOR OF *RADICAL SON*

THE POLITICS OF BAD FAITH

THE RADICAL ASSAULT ON AMERICA'S FUTURE

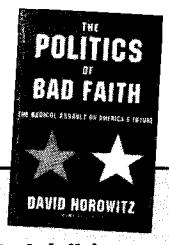
BY DAVID HOROWITZ

This elegant, insightful work ought to be widely read as a necessary corrective to the most dangerous moral disease of our times.
—Robert Bork

A series of essays that lay bare with surgical precision the ways in which American radical intellectuals have managed to disguise themselves as liberals and to marginalize the ideas of genuine liberals. Written with passion, it makes for fascinating reading.
—Richard Pipes

Published by the fP 25

Available in Bookstores October 7, 1998
To order call (800) 752-6562 ext. 209
Contact David Horowitz
through www.frontpagemag.com



A magazine of the net
FRONTPAGE (updated daily)
Edited by Peter Collier & David Horowitz
www.frontpagemag.com

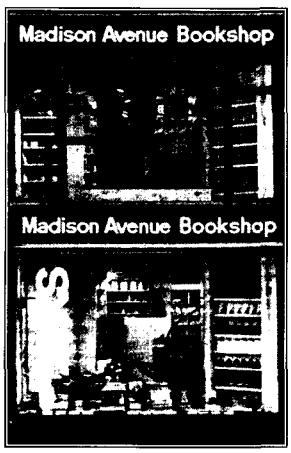
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DO YOU HAVE:

- *City Journal*
  Volume I, Issue 2 (Winter 1991)
  Volume I, Issue 3 (Spring 1991)
- *Gramophone*
  Index to Volume 70
- *The New Criterion*
  September, 1990
  November, 1990
  November, 1992

IF SO, AND YOU ARE WILLING TO SELL, PLEASE WRITE TO :

P.O. Box 7394
FDR Station
New York, NY 10150-7394



Madison Avenue Bookshop

833 Madison Avenue
(between 69th & 70th Sts.)
New York, New York 10021
535-6130

taking the adage, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do," a step beyond urbanity.

The 10,000 Britons who went to Rome—a notoriously expensive city—had well-paid jobs, requiring education and training. The man next to me, for example, was a computer programmer, in charge of the information technology of a city council. All those I asked were employed in skilled capacities; a Sotheby's auctioneer, I was told, was in the crowd.

I asked a few people around me why they behaved like this. Did they not think it unseemly to go a thousand miles just to shout obscenities at strangers? They all claimed that it was both fun and a necessary release for them. A release from what, exactly? Frustration, they replied, if they replied anything. It had occurred to none of them that the petty drama of their internal lives did not provide a justification for antisocial activity. They thought that frustration was like pus in an abscess, better out than in: and I was reminded of a murderer who once said to me that he had had to kill his victim, otherwise he didn't know what he might have done.

At the Rome airport, I witnessed an extraordinary instance of the desire for the appearance, if not the reality, of downward social mobility. An Englishwoman in her thirties ahead of me, unmistakably upper-middle class, spoke politely, with the received pronunciation, at the check-in counter. A little later, I saw her again in the bus that took us to the plane. Now that she was among the soccer-fan friends with whom she had come to Rome, she adopted a lower-class accent and larded her speech liberally with four-letter words.

Soccer fans are by no means the only prosperous Britons who affect underclass hooliganism abroad, however. Recently, the British vice-consul on the island of Ibiza resigned, because he no longer wished to rescue the citizens of his country from the legal consequences of their own incontinent behavior.

Why should the British have become such total and shameless vulgarians in a matter of three or four decades? Why should a kind of Gresham's Law of behavior now operate, such that bad conduct drives out good?

Like so many modern ills, the coarseness of spirit and behavior grows out of ideas brewed up in the academy and among intellectuals—ideas that have seeped outward and are now having their practical effect on the rest of society. The relativism that has ruled the academy for many years has now come to rule the mind of the population. The British middle class has bought the multiculti cant that, where culture is concerned, there is only difference, not better or worse. As a practical matter, that means that there is nothing to choose between good manners and bad, refinement and crudity, discernment and lack of discernment, subtle-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ty and grossness, charm and boorishness. To refrain from urinating in doorways, say, is thus no better than not refraining: it is merely different, and a preference for doorways free of the smell of urine is but a bourgeois prejudice without intellectual or moral justification. Since it is easier and more immediately gratifying to behave without restraint than with it, and there is no longer any generally accepted argument or even prejudice in favor of the restraint that leads to public decorum, there is no standpoint from which to criticize vulgarity.

British society and culture were additionally vulnerable to attack from the intellectuals, for historically they were openly elitist and therefore supposedly undemocratic. That its cultural productions were magnificent, that Newton and Darwin, Shakespeare and Dickens, Hume and Adam Smith, did not speak to or for a national elite but to and for all mankind, has been conveniently forgotten. Nor did it matter for ideological purposes that, though elitist, British society and culture were never closed, but that anyone of talent was able to make his contribution: that Britain absorbed outsiders into its inner circle with ease, from Sir Anthony Van Dyck to Joseph Conrad, from Sir William Herschel to Sir Karl Popper, from George Frideric Handel to Sir Ernst Gombrich. A simplified account of British history has been peddled, according to which it was nothing but a tale of oppression, exploitation, and snobbery (all of which, of course, existed). A rejection of the traditions of British high culture was therefore in itself a meritorious political act, a sign of solidarity with those whom history had oppressed and exploited.

An early avatar of this rejection was the metamorphosis of Viscount Stansgate into Tony Benn, the left-wing politician, via the intermediate or pupal stage of Anthony Wedgwood-Benn. He was obliged to forgo his hereditary peerage to continue to sit in the House of Commons, but the plebeian contraction of his family name was his own invention. Left-wing in everything except his finances, he sent his children in well-publicized fashion to the local state school, omitting to mention the extensive private tutoring they received. A perfect solution to the moral dilemma facing every left-leaning parent of the upper and middle classes: the moral high ground of having self-denyingly rejected private education, while simultaneously having avoided the disastrously low educational standards in the state system that have left at least a quarter of the British population virtually illiterate.

The combination of relativism and antipathy to traditional culture has played a large part in creating the underclass, thus turning Britain from a class into a caste society. The poorest people were deprived both of a sense of cultural hierarchy and of the moral imperative to conform their conduct to any standard whatever. Henceforth what they had and what they did was as good as anything, because all cultures and all cultural artifacts are equal. Aspiration was therefore pointless: and thus they have been as immobilized in their poverty—material, mental, and spiritual—as completely as the damned in Dante's *Inferno*.

Having in large part created this underclass, the British intelligentsia, guilty about its own allegedly undemocratic antecedents, feels obliged to flatter it by imitation and has persuaded the rest of the middle class to do likewise. And so, just as in Russia under the tsars, every town and village had its Holy Fool for Christ's Sake, whose selfishness and misconduct were taken as signs of his deep attachment to Christian principle, we in Britain now have hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of middle-class people whose willingness to shout *Fuck off* for hours at Italians is living proof of the purity of their democratic sentiments.

For anyone who does not want to see the lowest common cultural denominator triumph, but who also remains attached to the ideal of liberal democracy, the spectacle of British vulgarity is very disturbing. There are more votes in the flattery of vulgarity than in the denunciation of it.

Does that mean it is destined to be ever victorious?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Letters

A Delighted Dean

To the editor:
Heather Mac Donald's article "Why Johnny's Teacher Can't Teach" (Spring 1998), on the destructive absurdities rampant in education schools, was superb. I've not read in many years a more cogent, no-nonsense analysis of institutionalized charlatanism. The clarity, reasoning, good sense, and frankness of her essay invoke dramatically the image of college and university emperors with no clothes. I intend to give her essay wide circulation in the School of Education.

Kenneth Stunkel
Dean, Monmouth University

Bad Rap

To the editor:
Heather Mac Donald confuses cause and effect in her article on El Puente's Hip-Hop 101 course (Summer 1998). She alleges that the teenagers in Edgardo Miranda's class are lethargic, bored, antisocial, and possess abysmal problem-solving skills, and she holds alternative education and classes like Miranda's largely responsible.

As a volunteer at El Puente two years ago, I was equally dismayed at the students' educational deficiencies. But I quickly saw that it's not a question of alternative versus traditional education, but of trying to engage and educate alienated youth versus losing them to the streets and jails.

FPG

Miranda's students have already been bombarded with mainstream hip-hop culture for at least a decade. It's not unusual to see five-year-old children reciting profanity laden rap lyrics on city streets. For a taste of mainstream hip-hop culture, check out one of the thousands of music videos starring "studio-gangstas" in Mercedes cars, with fake guns and tacky jewelry, bragging about their money while a half-dozen "video hos" in bikinis stroke their bodies. Misogynistic, violent, unabashedly materialistic—mainstream hip-hop is a conglomeration of American culture's worst tendencies.

But Miranda challenges students to use hip-hop as a positive force. He can't force the kids to complete homework or instantly manufacture enthusiasm for learning, but he challenges them to solve spatial, linguistic, and physical problems through a culture they already possess.

Mac Donald ridicules this, pointing out that time wasted on alternative education could be put into much-needed English, history, and math drills. As she surely knows but fails to point out, many El Puente students have left other high schools after ten years' worth of such an education, which, for one reason or another (to be debated elsewhere), hasn't worked for them.

Edgardo Miranda and El Puente are saving lives every day.

Mike Kamber
Brooklyn, New York

Heather Mac Donald responds:
If hip-hop culture is as pernicious as Mr. Kamber persuasively claims, why waste even a second of precious class time perpetuating its hold on urban youth? Mr. Kamber contends that Hip-Hop 101 teaches students how "to use hip-hop as a positive force," yet he offers not a single example of how an improved knowledge of graffiti or rap music will help students in the adult world of work and family. Far from keeping students out of jail, the glamorization of graffiti only increases their chances of ending up there.

Mr. Kamber argues that the ignorance of El Puente's students shows the futility of traditional education and thus the need for an alternative approach. His premise is as absurd as his conclusion. Before coming to El Puente, students have hardly had a rigorous traditional curriculum; New York's "mainstream" schools are almost as wedded to progressive ideology as are its alternative schools,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

staffed as they are by graduates of its education schools.

Furthermore, it's defeatist to contend that if, after ten years of school, students still haven't learned elementary history and language skills, they should be given a pass and taught pop culture. Would Mr. Kamber apply the same argument to respect for the law—that if, after ten years of unsuccessful disciplinary proceedings, a student continues to assault his classmates and teachers, he should be allowed to mug in peace? One hopes not; but the need for basic skills and knowledge is just as compelling as the need for lawful behavior.

Ultimately, Mr. Kamber's apology for Hip-Hop 101 reveals progressivism's misunderstanding of education and its contempt for urban children. Education shouldn't reinforce the media-driven culture that children "already possess," but should take them out of their narrow world and expose them to ideas and truths they would otherwise never possess. To consign poor, minority kids to second-class knowledge just because that's all they've ever known is destructive and unfair.

Crime Computers

To the editor:
In "Criminal Entitlements," (Soundings, Summer 1998), Peter Reinharz wrote, "It's only common sense to require corrections departments to send inmate lists to local public assistance agencies so they can modify payments accordingly."

The New York City Human Resources Administration couldn't agree more. Computer matches between inmate lists and public assistance and food-stamps rolls are conducted weekly with the city's Department of Corrections and monthly with the city's Department of Juvenile Justice. In addition, the state's Department of Temporary and Disability Assistance conducts a similar match with the State Department of Criminal Justice Services. During the last fiscal year, these matches saved taxpayers over $3.7 million.

New York City automatically terminates assistance when a recipient matched to the Department of Corrections file is the only adult for that case. A match with the Department of Juvenile Justice results in the juvenile's removal from a public assistance case.

Mark Hoover
First Deputy Commissioner, NYCHRA

Peter Reinharz responds:
I'm pleased the city reviews inmate lists to adjust public assistance payments. The protocol should be expanded statewide. All venues should check their adult and juvenile correctional facilities, as well as the *state* incarceration systems, to ensure payments aren't made on behalf of those already in custodial care. Computer matches should do the trick, with considerable savings to the public.

Tolerating Disorder

To the editor:
Theodore Dalrymple's article "Zero Intolerance" (Summer 1998) illustrates the steady drift toward lawlessness when police decide to act only against certain crimes. My experience as a local councillor in England suggests that this attitude, unchecked, spreads to other organizations that help maintain public order.

Graffiti spraying in Brighton and Hove is epidemic—taking place even in sight of police security cameras in the town center. The police response: "There is nothing we can do." The results are predictable.

A spate of graffiti recently appeared on a railway bridge in my ward. When I asked the company that owns and manages the railroad infrastructure to remove it, I was told that the company policy was to remove only racist or obscene graffiti. If the scrawl does not fall into one of these categories, it stays—a blank check to wanton graffiti spraying. Now, gang symbols have appeared on private homes and businesses in the district.

New York's mayor has shown that persistent prosecution—intolerance—is the answer to this (and so many other) crimes.

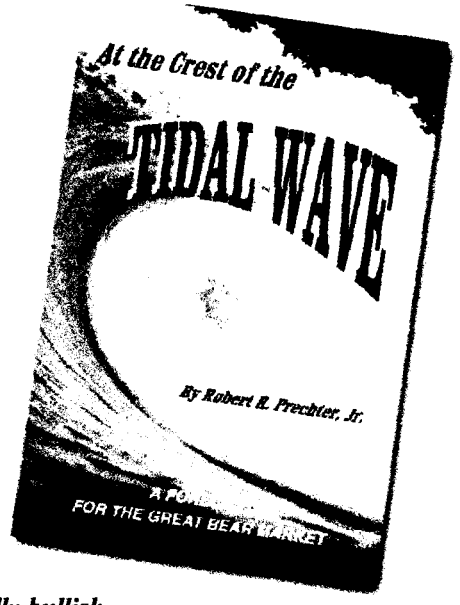
Brian Oxley
Brighton and Hove Unitary Council
Hove, England.

City Journal *welcomes letters to the editor. Our address:* City Journal, *52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017–3802.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Do You Have a Strategy for Safety When Today's Investment Mania is Over?

Discover what is *really* unfolding in the financial markets and the economy: Read *At the Crest of the Tidal Wave*. The historical perspective presented in this long term analysis is the result of 17 years of study. If you read it while there is still time to act, it could save your portfolio.



"A brilliant and important piece of research." — Paul Tudor Jones II, President, Tudor Investment Corp.

"Not only does Bob have a grasp of what is truly happening underneath the surface but the book is filled with long-term financial data that is worth a fortune. Great stuff!" — C.B., Switzerland

"...All investors should read this book." — Bill Griffeth, CNBC

"The feeling in the land today is that all investments always go up long term.* At the Crest *reminds us that there have been times in history when they actually go down for protracted periods, and explains why we may be on the verge of another such time. Today's wildly bullish money managers need to be aware of Bob Prechter and his arguments, whether they agree with him or not."
— Jim Rogers, author of *Investment Biker*

"His analysis is a must for would-be investors." — Martin Baker, International Herald Tribune

"1996 Book of the Year" — Supertrader's Almanac

You may or may not agree with his forecasts, but as a serious investor, you owe it to yourself to consider the overwhelming evidence presented in this book before making your next investment decision. By reading it now, you will learn how you can protect your assets from the coming investment tidal wave and be one of the few able to profit when the coming opportunities arise.

Call 800-336-1618 or 770-536-0309 to order today!

Just $49 plus postage

(U.S. & Canada add $5 postage; overseas add $16;
GA residents add appropriate sales tax.)
Quantity Discounts Available

BONUS!

Order now and we'll send you Robert Prechter's up-to-date analysis on stocks, bonds, precious metals and the economy *absolutely* **FREE!**

Our No-Risk Guarantee:
Return the book in original condition within 30 days of purchase for a 100% refund of the purchase price.

Published by New Classics Library, a division of

Elliott Wave International

Post Office Box 1618 Gainesville, Georgia 30503, U.S.A.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TW-CJ

Contributors

Brian C. Anderson is senior editor of *City Journal* and the author of *Raymond Aron: The Recovery of the Political*. His writings have appeared in *First Things*, *The Wilson Quarterly*, and *The Salisbury Review*.

Theodore Dalrymple is a physician who regularly sees patients in an English prison. He is a contributing editor of *City Journal*, a columnist for the London *Spectator*, and a frequent contributor to the *Daily Telegraph*.

Kay S. Hymowitz, a contributing editor of *City Journal*, has written about children and education for the *Wall Street Journal*, *The New Republic*, *Dissent*, and the *New York Times*. She is currently working on a book about the end of childhood.

E. V. Kontorovich, a former newspaperman at the *New York Post* and the *Wall Street Journal* editorial pages, is now a first-year law student at the University of Chicago.

Heather Mac Donald is a contributing editor of *City Journal* and John M. Olin Fellow at the Manhattan Institute. Her articles have appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, *The New Republic*, *The New Criterion*, and the *New York Times*.

Richard E. Morgan is William Nelson Cromwell Professor of Constitutional Law and Government at Bowdoin College. He is at work on a book about the Supreme Court in the 1980s, *Constitutional Conservatism: The Counterrevolution That Couldn't*.

James Morrison is a documentary filmmaker and coauthor of *The Stuff Americans Are Made Of*, a treatise on American culture. He is now finishing his second novel.

Matt Robinson is a national issues writer for *Investor's Business Daily*.

Roger Scruton is a writer and philosopher living in England. He is a new contributing editor of *City Journal* and editor of *The Salisbury Review*. His books include *Sexual Desire*, *The Aesthetics of Music*, and the forthcoming *An Intelligent Person's Guide to Modern Culture*.

Sol Stern, a contributing editor of *City Journal*, has written for *Commentary* and the *Wall Street Journal* and has served as a policy analyst for the governments of New York City and New York State.

William J. Stern is a contributing editor of *City Journal*. He chaired Governor Cuomo's 1982 campaign and from 1983 to 1985 headed the state's Urban Development Corporation.

Our cover painting shows a detail from *Brooklyn Bridge at Night* (1909), by Edward Redfield. Courtesy CIGNA Museum and Art Collection.

City Journal (ISSN 1060-8540) is published four times a year by the Manhattan Institute, 52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017. Telephone: (212) 599-7000. Fax: (212) 599-0371. E-mail: cj@city-journal.org. Subscription rates: one year: $19.95; two years: $34.95; back issues: $7 (10 or more, $6 each); reprints: $3.00. Subscription telephone: (800) 562-1973. For subscription complaints, write Edward Craig at the Manhattan Institute. Distributed in the United States by Bernard DeBoer, Inc., 113 East Centre Street, Nutley, NJ 07110, (973) 667-9300; Hudson News Company, 1305 Paterson Plank Road, North Bergen, NJ 07047, (201) 867-3600; Ingram Periodicals Inc., 1240 Heil Quaker Blvd., La Vergne, TN 37086, (800) 627-6247; International Periodical Distributors, 674 Via de la Valle, Suite 200, Solano Beach, CA 92075, (619) 481-5928; Ubiquity Distributors, 607 DeGraw Street, Brooklyn, NY 11217, (718) 875-5491.

Please visit our website at www.city-journal.org.

Signed articles express the views of their authors and are intended solely to inform and broaden public debate. They are not intended to aid or hinder legislation before legislative bodies at the municipal, state, or federal level. © 1998 by the Manhattan Institute, Inc.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Postmodern Mores

E. V. Kontorovich

When I moved to New York, I began giving up my subway seat to every woman, senior, and invalid I saw. Yet I frequently witnessed a scene that made my teeth clench: frail grandfathers and expectant mothers hanging on to poles in a packed car, as fit young men sat, seemingly oblivious. There's a lot of talk these days about restoring civility. The idea and practice of deference—small sacrifices made to strangers in public places—is part of what's disappeared.

Deference serves a more important purpose, though, than the comfort of those who get seats. It is a recognition that we participate in humanity, whose common theme is age, frailty, and the trials of motherhood.

Snarling feminists often get the rap for doing in deference—at least toward women. But using feminism as an excuse for not yielding one's seat, as many men do use it, isn't keeping up with the times; it's just selfishness. Indeed, no woman has ever rebuked me for offering my seat, as sometimes happened a decade ago. At first surprised, most are grateful. Young men still sitting seem embarrassed. Some look at their feet; others offer their seats in turn.

Once I vacated my seat for an elderly lady. Before she could totter over to it, a young lout stole the seat. He refused to move and grew belligerent when I confronted him. Breathing into my face, he told me I'd have to remove him physically. Just then, several nearby passengers added their moral force and told him to give the lady the seat. He did.

Deference still lives in the hearts of city folk; the sentiment must simply be excited. Through schooling, subway signs, censure by friends, we teach people that such sacrifice is still expected and accepted.

But recently I had occasion to ask whether some small sacrifices are no longer tenable—because they are no longer so small. Strolling down Eighth Avenue in Chelsea with a friend, I stepped over a bum lying in the street, a puddle of thick blood forming under his head. By the time I called an ambulance, a small crowd had gathered. One passerby felt for a pulse; another tried to wake the victim, whose wound, a long gash, still bled. I got on my belly to look at the injury. I saw the cut would open further, and I smelled that the man reeked of booze.

Remembering old Boy Scout lessons, I applied pressure to the wound with my pocket square, stanching the gooey flow. People looked at me oddly. A fire truck soon arrived, and out jumped men in thick blue gloves, the kind used to clean up alien germs on *The X-Files*.

I panicked. Discarding the rag, I washed my hands in a nearby restaurant washroom until the skin wrinkled. Only then did I look carefully at the drunk—emaciated, pale lips, hair falling out, clutching a cane, and dressed like a clown. We were on a block with several homosexual clubs. I remembered the news stories of nurses and medical residents who'd gotten AIDS from the blood of infected patients, and I grew faint and sick. Only after a number of doctors reassured me did I calm down.

Boy Scout mottoes were written before AIDS. These are strange times, when doctors would counsel me not to assist an injured man. Perhaps in the future I would act differently: better him than him *and* me. But such pragmatism depresses me.

What sacrifice we owe to a stranger in distress has been long a subject of custom, as well as of common and maritime law. To a drowning man, tradition teaches, one must throw a line, not jump into the rough waves oneself.

Deference has survived feminism, despite all the buffeting it received, and it will survive AIDS. First, we must refuse to use threats to deference as excuses to stop making tiny sacrifices. We must keep before us the civic purpose of deference: to remind us that we have obligations to fellow citizens beyond the strictly legal. We can honor this idea in ways short of suicide, like calling an ambulance for a stricken man instead of stepping over him, and comforting the poor creature even as you fear to touch him. •

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Why

does a business loan come with so much paperwork, when you have too much already?

Chase realizes you can't get your real work done if you're buried in paperwork for a loan. So our business loan application is only one page, and **no financial statements are required** when applying for loans up to $50,000.

Those are just some of the ways we make things **as easy as possible** for small business owners. You also **get a credit decision in just three business days,** because we know a week is too long to wait.

To find out more about our business loans and revolving lines of credit, **call 1-800-CHASE24** or just stop by any of our 500 neighborhood branches.

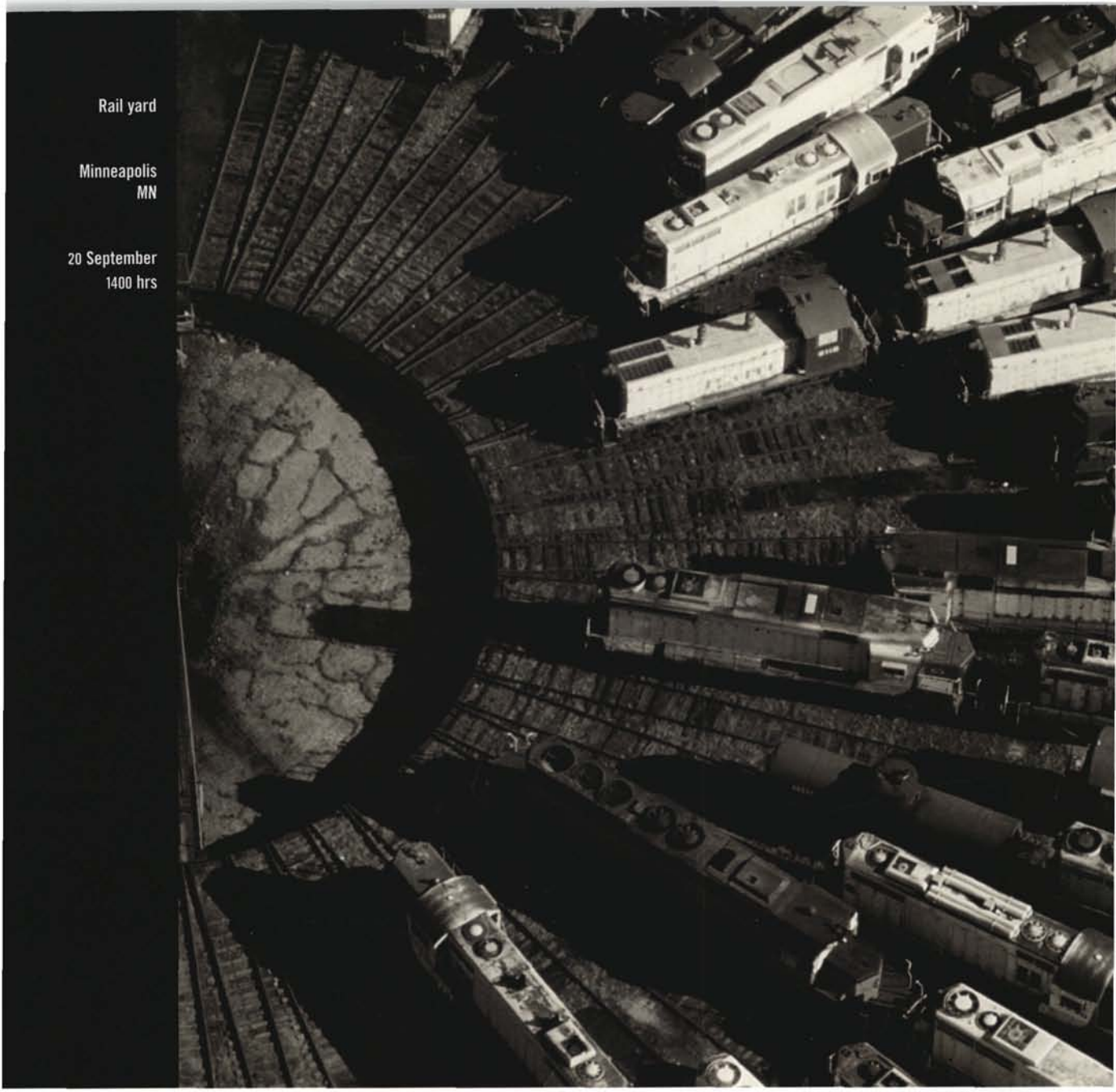
The Chase **Small Business Loan.**

CHASE. The right relationship is everything.℠

Loans in excess of $100,000 and SBA guaranteed loans require additional documentation and a separate closing. All loan requests are subject to credit approval.
©1997. The Chase Manhattan Bank. Member FDIC. Equal Opportunity Lender.

EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



WITHOUT THE RIGHT COVERAGE, YOUR COMPANY CAN BE FLATTENED BY A TRAIN THAT'S STANDING STILL.

All it takes is a rail strike, a streak of bad weather or a sudden change in an exchange rate and your company's bottom line can sustain a major injury. So businesses require a partner that can anticipate and protect against multiple risks with innovative solutions.

AIG Risk Finance is that partner. With our financial resources, insurance underwriting and capital markets expertise, we can bundle together risks other financial institutions can't assume. When AIG Risk Finance combines a company's financial and insurance risk into a single program, the integrated coverage can create efficiencies that might not be realized using more traditional forms of risk management.

For instance, our Commodity-Embedded Insurance (COIN) program limits the earnings per share impact for our clients by joining traditional insurance risks with financial exposures like primary commodities, foreign exchange and interest rate fluctuations.

AIG Risk Finance, a division of the AIG Companies, has access to an unparalleled global network, with operations in approximately 130 countries and jurisdictions worldwide. And we have top financial ratings to back us up. So we'll be there to help your business stay on the right track.

AIG

WORLD LEADERS IN INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

American International Group, Inc., Dept. A, 70 Pine Street, New York, NY 10270 www.aig.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED